Basic Skills:

Summer 2016

Contents

Chapter 1

Overview

Areas covered:

- Basic Functions
- Umbrella Functions
- Resources for Librarians

Collection development (also known as collection or materials management) involves the identification, selection, acquisition, and evaluation of a collection of library resources (e.g., print materials, audiovisual materials, electronic resources) for a community of users. While it is the goal of collection development to meet the information needs of everyone in a user community, this is not usually realized due to financial constraints, the diversity of user information needs, and the vast amount of available information. Nonetheless, public libraries strive to provide the greatest number of library resources to meet the information and recreational needs of the majority of their user community, within the confines of fiscal realities.

Collection development can be divided into two parts, both of which are addressed in this course:
1) Basic functions that virtually every public library performs during the collection development process (i.e., Selection of Library Materials, Acquisitions, Weeding, Preservation, and Intellectual Freedom), and
2) Umbrella functions that are intended to inform library staff of the collection development process itself (i.e., Collection Development Policies, Community Needs Assessment, and Collection Assessment). While not every public library writes a collection development policy or performs assessment studies, these processes can provide useful information for collection development.

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the primary components of the collection development process covered in this course. You can use this chapter to get a quick idea of which aspect of collection development you would like to learn more about. While we have divided up the collection development process into discrete sections, collection development is not a linear process; each component of the process overlaps with another to some degree.

Basic Functions

When most people think about collection development, selection of library materials, acquisitions, donations, weeding, preservation, and protecting intellectual freedom are likely to be the kinds of activities that come to mind. These are the types of collection development functions that are performed by almost every public library.

▶Selection of Library Materials

Selection is at the heart of the collection development process. This core function builds the library's collection for a particular user community. Skill, knowledge, and the right tools are required to select appropriate library materials that meet the needs of the community. While it is challenging to build a balanced collection that meets the needs of your user community, this course provides you with evaluation criteria, selection tools, and selection considerations to aid you in the selection process. In addition to identifying print resources to aid in the selection process, we also present many links to Internet resources that should be useful in making selection decisions. Selection information is provided for a variety of library materials, specifically:

▷**Books:**
Books are the main staple of a public library collection. This section gives pointers for how to evaluate books and identifies several selection tools that should help you make selection decisions.

▷**Audiovisual Materials:**
Given the need to view or listen to audiovisual materials, the process involved in the selection of audiovisual materials is different than for books. This section provides selection tips and criteria for audiocassettes (particularly audio books), videos, microforms, maps, globes and games.

▷**Periodicals:**
Periodicals (including magazines and journals) present unique collection challenges. Since periodicals are published on a continuing basis, they require an ongoing financial commitment and large amounts of space on your library's bookshelves. This section identifies selection considerations for periodicals, as well as selection criteria and resources that should aid in the selection process.

▷**Electronic Resources:**
More and more today, information is being stored digitally and disseminated electronically. Indexes, dictionaries, encyclopedias, games, and all types of materials are available on CD-ROM and online. It can be particularly difficult to decide when to purchase an item in an electronic format rather than in print or another format. This section addresses content, access, technical support, cost, and legal considerations related to selection of electronic resources and identifies selection tools.

▶Acquisitions
After you have selected the library materials you would like to add to your collection, you must acquire them. The acquisitions process involves confirming the details of price and publication, locating the item, ordering it, and processing the item and the paperwork once they arrive. This chapter considers possible acquisition strategies, defines commonly used terms, and suggests ways to simplify the process using automation and the Web. Acquisitions procedures are discussed for books, periodicals, audiovisual materials, and electronic resources.

▶Weeding
Weeding (also known as deselection) is a periodic or continual evaluation of resources intended to remove items that are no longer useful from the collection. Weeding can be one of the most controversial aspects of collection development, and a carefully prepared and fully documented policy on weeding (as part of your overall collection development policy) can lessen or alleviate some misunderstandings. This chapter discusses the rationale behind weeding, some reasons it is difficult to weed, practical information for use in planning or conducting weeding, and options for the materials you remove.

▶Preservation
All libraries must decide what to do with items in disrepair. At what point is an item beyond repair? Should it be replaced? Preservation and conservation refer to the processes of monitoring the physical condition of the library's materials and taking action to prevent further deterioration. This chapter discusses some of the most common preservation and conservation problems faced in a small library (such as climate control, infestations of insects, mold or mildew, and brittle paper) and common techniques used to handle these problems (such as book handling, repair and non-print preservation).

▶Intellectual Freedom
As a public librarian overseeing and building a collection paid for by the taxpayer, it is common to experience challenges to materials in the collection. This chapter discusses where censorship comes from, some of the main intellectual freedom issues to consider during the selection process (e.g., balance, questionable truth, obscenity), and procedures to follow if you are faced with a challenge to an item in your collection. Given the concerns about how the Internet is used, especially among school-aged children, this section also provides links to sample Internet Use Policies.

Umbrella Functions

While most librarians have an innate sense of what direction the library's collection is heading, what their users want from their library, and how their collections are used, periodically it can be useful to step back and reevaluate your collection priorities and preconceived notions of your community. These umbrella functions provide you with the tools to reevaluate your collection goals in relation to your user community. While these functions usually provide valuable information, they may not be done frequently (or ever!) due to the staff time and resources required for these projects -- especially in smaller libraries.

▶Collection Development Policies
A collection development policy is a written statement of your library's intentions for building its collection. It describes the collection's strengths and weaknesses and provides guidelines for your staff. This chapter discusses the importance of collection development policies, outlines the basic elements of these policies, and identifies the steps involved in writing a policy for your library.

▶Community Needs Assessment

A needs assessment involves collecting data on the information needs of your community. The assessment provides valuable information about how well your library is currently meeting the needs of your community and what other types of resources and services your library can provide in the future. This chapter should help you decide how best to go about doing an assessment and what you can expect to gain.

It discusses the steps involved in performing a needs assessment: deciding who will conduct the study, what kinds of information to collect, how the information will be collected, and how the information will be used.

▶Collection Assessment

Collection assessment is "an organized process for systematically analyzing and describing a library's collection." Assessments are conducted to provide several kinds of important information to libraries. They help clarify the library's goals in the context of its mission and budget, supply data used to set funding priorities, and build a base for long-range planning and administration.

Resources for Librarians

Collection Development and Management for 21st Century Library Collections by Vicki Gregory

Collection Management Basics by G. Edwards Evans

Chapter 2

Collection Development Policies

Areas covered:

- Why Collection Development Policies Are Important
- Elements of the Collection Development Policy
- How to Write a Collection Development Policy
- Resources for Librarians

A collection development policy is a written statement of your library's intentions for building its collection. It describes the collection's strengths and weaknesses and provides guidelines for your staff. Producing one is a commitment; it takes time and careful consideration to develop a useful and relevant document. Once you have completed the document and your Library Board has approved it, it is a good idea to put your collection development policy on the World Wide Web as an example for other librarians so that it is available beyond your local community.

A collection development policy should be a living document, adaptable to change and growth. It provides guidelines that can be modified as your library's collection needs change. This section discusses the importance of collection development policies, outlines the basic elements of these policies, and identifies the steps involved in writing a policy for your library.

Why Collection Development Policies Are Important

While not every library has a collection development policy, polices can be useful for several reasons. First, a policy provides a point of reference for staff to consult when deciding on whether to acquire, discard or reject an item. By following the guidelines established in your policy, you can make more consistent and informed decisions about the collection and provide continuity during times of staff turnover or funding changes. In addition, your policy serves as a source of reinforcement when an item is challenged by a patron.

Elements of the Collection Development Policy

A collection development policy is comprised of several elements, although the specific elements included in a policy may vary from library to library. This section discusses the basic policy components and provides excerpts from actual collection development policies of public libraries to demonstrate how each section might be worded. We have also included some links to the Web versions of public library collection development policies so that you can view complete examples of collection development policies yourself.

▶**Community Profile**

Many policies start with a brief descriptive community profile or background that

identifies general characteristics about the community the library serves, the library service area, and/or the library's general goals or mission. It can be as short as a couple of sentences. For example, the written policy of Benson Public Library in Arizona states: "Benson Public Library is a public facility supported through taxes from the residents of the City of ***Benson***, Arizona. The Benson community includes people from diverse educational, cultural and economic backgrounds displaying a wide variety of interests, needs, values, viewpoints and occupations. Through a formal intergovernmental agreement with Cochise County Library, Benson Public Library provides library services to the incorporated area of Benson and the surrounding communities of Pomerene, Dragoon, St. David and J-6."

Community Needs Assessment

Following the community profile statement is often a needs assessment of your community. This gives a more detailed understanding of your community, focusing on descriptions of the services offered by your library and how they relate to the needs of your community. Formal needs assessments require learning about the people in your community by conducting research (e.g., through surveys or reviewing demographic data and trends).

Collection Goals

Collection goals represent what the library's priorities are for various aspects of the collection. Many policies address the library's collection goals by collection category (e.g. Adult Fiction, Adult Non-Fiction, Children's Books, Reference Materials, Periodicals, Non- Book Materials, Large Print, Spanish Collection, Paperbacks, South Dakota Collection, Local History, Genealogy, and Vertical File).

For example, a sample statement on Children's Books might read:

> "The Library maintains a picture book collection for preschoolers and fiction and non-fiction sections for elementary and high school use. A reasonable attempt is made to select according to quality and user demand. We do not select according to school curriculum, as that is covered by the school libraries." (Benson Public Library, AZ)

Collection goals for a Nebraska Collection might read:

> "Community interest indicates that this is one of the library's most used areas. This collection includes information regarding the Plains region; that is, South Dakota and states which border South Dakota. An attempt is made to cover all aspects of the state and region for visitor and newcomer information, school reports, casual interest and research. Articles and pamphlets are also available in notebook and vertical file form."

Selection Responsibility

If there is more than one staff member at your library, you must decide who will be in charge of selection. It is best to have this as a shared responsibility to avoid biases and allow discussion, but this may not be possible. With only one staff member, perhaps a community panel could be organized to help determine what to select or discard.

For example from Santa Clara, CA County Library:

> "1.The initial responsibility for materials selection lies with the professional staffs at the libraries operating within the areas of service to children, young adults, and adults. All staff members and the general public may recommend material for consideration.
> 2. The ultimate responsibility for selection rests by law with the County Librarian."

Selection Criteria

Collection development policies typically include a description of the criteria used to make selection decisions within specific subject areas, including the preferred formats. An example of a fairly elaborate "Principles of Selection" can be seen at Santa Clara County Library. For another approach, you could follow Washoe County Library's example.

It is important to identify your selection criteria for books, media, periodicals, electronic resources, and Internet resources. As examples, Eugene Public Library covers most of these individually and succinctly, and so does Boulder (Colorado) Public Library though more elaborately. You might even consider including statements about how you select for different age-levels, such as adult, youth, and children, or the levels of collecting by subject areas such as travel, languages, local and regional history, and your Nebraska collection. Queens Borough Public Library illustrates some of these considerations.

Some statements that are commonly seen in collection development policies, depending on the library's selection criteria, are:

- The library will collect non-fiction in all subject areas, including opposing viewpoints.
- The majority of best-selling fiction materials will be purchased during the extent of their popularity.
- The selectors will acquire only those items favorably reviewed in two or more selection aids.
- The library will not select items that contain violent or sensational material.
- The library will only select items that reflect the needs of our community.

Well, now you're about half-way through! Statements about how you acquire (including your policy for gifts and donations), collection assessment and evaluation, how and when you weed, preservation, and your intellectual freedom policy are left.

Acquisitions

The policy should describe your typical acquisitions procedures and should include a statement covering how you handle gifts. Not many libraries include statements about how they acquire materials in their policies, except to cover donations. For example:

> "Gifts of books and other materials are accepted with the understanding that the library may make whatever use of the material it feels appropriate. The same criteria is used for gifts as for collection development. Items not

needed in the collection will be sold and the proceeds given to the Friends of Benson Public Library." (Benson Public Library, AZ)

The Boulder Public Library has a very similar gift policy.

Donations

Donations of books and other materials are a sign of interest in the library, as well as a practical means of support. Accepting donations can be a tricky business, depending on who is making the gift, the needs of the library and the donor's wishes for the gift. It is important to address donations in your collection development policy so that all gifts can be handled appropriately and diplomatically. This area discusses some of the issues surrounding donations, as well as some other ways to involve the community in collection development.

The Importance of a Gift Policy

As with other areas of collection development, a written policy is a necessity. By stating your conditions for accepting gifts and clearly outlining the possible uses for donations, chances are good that everyone involved in the donation will be satisfied with the outcome. A gift policy should state that you will apply the same objective selection criteria to donations that you would apply to purchases of new books. It should also state what books you will not accept, such as reference books over five years old or textbooks. The librarian should reserve, in writing, the right to accept, reject, sell or otherwise dispose of donated materials. It may be helpful to have donators sign a form indicating that donations are made without restriction and that they understand that the library may use the donated items as the librarian deems appropriate.

Local and/or Historic Materials

Items that deserve special attention include books by local authors, local photographs of historical interest (if the subjects or places are not identified, perhaps some long-time residents might be able to lend a hand), yearbooks from local schools, local newspapers of historical importance, and local memorabilia. Keep in mind that old photographs may need special (possibly expensive) treatment to prevent them from deteriorating; color photocopies on acid-free paper may be a good option. Likewise, old newspapers and scrapbooks of newspaper clippings should probably be photocopied, laminated (in multiple pieces, if necessary) and/or microfilmed before they become useless. See the Preservation chapter of this course for more information.

Problematic Materials

Storage limits would probably prevent you from accepting everything offered to the library, but you should also consider how useful the material would be in your collection and what condition it is in. Be sure to check donations carefully for damage, wear and mold, mildew or insect infestation. To be useful to a library, donated books need to be in good condition, be attractive to readers, and meet selection criteria including currency and "fit" in the collection. If you receive books that are in good condition but aren't suitable for your collection, you might try to sell or exchange them at a second-hand book dealer.

Donations of someone's collection of "old books" and magazines require careful screening. A really valuable "old book" collection is rare, since monetary value depends on condition and interest to collectors. Old periodicals will probably receive very little use but take up a lot of space.
Unless you have a great deal of room, plus time and money for processing, both kinds of gifts should probably be avoided. Some authors argue that you should never turn down any donation. Whether you decide to accept all gifts or screen them before they are accepted will be determined by how many donations you handle and how much time, space and effort is available for processing them.

Selling Donations
Donations are often perfect candidates for book sales. If they are in good condition but don't fit in your collection, don't hesitate to put them to good use by raising money through a book sale. Since your gift policy should address the sale of donated books, this should be an acceptable option to all parties.

Gifts to Encourage
Some libraries hold "Buy a Book for the Library" or memorial campaigns that can result in many new additions to the collection. It is very important, however, to retain control over collection development. Donated memorial books must meet all the same criteria as any other donation or purchase. One strategy might be to provide a list of titles (chosen by the librarian) from which customers can select memorial books. It is also vital to be sure that campaigns do not become a replacement for regular adequate funding.

Other Ways to Involve the Public
This course discusses many ways to include the community in the collection development process. Customers should be encouraged to participate in the selection process by requesting new materials, although final buying decisions should be made by the librarian. During a weeding project, you could seek the advice of knowledgeable patrons such as teachers, medical workers, or craftspeople to determine whether your materials measure up to current theoretical and practical standards.

Collection Evaluation and Assessment
Your library's collection evaluation and assessment techniques are discussed in this section, indicating the formulas or other methods used. Your collection's strengths and weaknesses also need to be presented. Eugene Public Library includes a detailed statement of the specific measures used for the evaluation and assessment. Washoe County Library also addresses collection evaluation issues; we have included an excerpt from that policy:
"The collection needs continuous evaluation in order to be sure that the Library is fulfilling its mission to provide materials in a timely manner to meet patrons' interests and needs. Statistical tools such as circulation reports, collection turnover rates, fill rates, reference fill rates, shelf allotments, and volume counts are studied to determine how the collection is being used and how it should change to answer patron usage.... Patron input and community surveys are also used in evaluating the collection...."

Weeding

It is a good idea to include your weeding guidelines and criteria in the collection development policy. This protects your library from some the questions that the community may have as you discard or remove books from the shelves. Your weeding policy can be a fairly simple statement, such as the following from the Boulder Public Library policy:

> "As materials become worn, dated, damaged or lost, replacement will be determined by the appropriate staff members, who will determine whether or not:
> A. The item is still available and can be replaced;
> B. Another item or format might better serve the same purpose;
> C. There remains sufficient need to replace that item;
> D. Updated, newer or revised materials better replace a given item;
> E. The item has historical value;
> F. Another networking agency could better provide that or a comparable item."

You can also see other examples of weeding criteria in the collection development policies of the following libraries: Washoe County Library's; Tippecanoe (Indiana) County Library; and Eugene Public Library.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

Collection development policies often include a section outlining how library staff should handle patron requests for reconsidering library materials (often called "challenges"). Being prepared is critical and having a clearly written policy before facing a challenge ensures that the situation will be handled properly. Many libraries also include a statement saying that they endorse the American Library Association's Bill of Rights principles.

Tippecanoe County Public Library, Boulder Public Library, and Washoe Public Library have detailed procedures in their collection development policies for handling requests for reconsideration of library materials.

A slightly briefer treatment can be found in the collection development policy from Eugene Public Library:

> Whenever any patron objects to the presence or absence of any library material, the complaint will be given hearing. All complaints to staff members will be referred to a librarian who will discuss the matter with the complainant. If not satisfied, the patron may make an appointment with the Library Services Director to discuss the matter further. If the patron wishes, s/he will be supplied with the "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form (Appendix C). If there is a request for withdrawal of material, the Library Services Director will name a committee to examine the item in question. This body will include the Library Services Director, a staff librarian, member of the Library Board and one or more additional staff members. The Committee will check reviews and determine whether the item conforms to the selection standards of this policy. If it is a request for addition of an item that has been rejected by the library, the Library Services Director will reconsider its addition. The Library Services Director has final responsibility for deciding whether to add or withdraw the

material in question and will write to the complainant giving the reasons for the decision. Materials subject to complaint shall not be removed from use pending final action.

An excerpt from the Benson Public Library's collection development policy states the library's position on collection of materials that may be considered offensive to library users:

> As a tax-supported institution, Benson Public Library is building a collection which includes opposing viewpoints, rather than supporting any one view of a particular topic or issue.
> Some of the materials may be offensive to individuals or groups because of individual perceptions of profanity, social, economic, and political ideas, religious viewpoints, the background of the author, or the kind of information provided. The library does not approve nor endorse any particular viewpoint or belief represented in its collection. The Library's role is to provide materials which will allow individuals to freely examine issues and make their own decisions. It is the responsibility of individuals to limit their reading to books and materials which are congruent with their individual tastes. While a person may reject materials for him/herself and his/her children, he/she may not restrict access to the materials by others.

Policy Review and Revision

When the policy is finished, you need to get it approved by your local officials. Their rubber stamp gives you the right to maintain the standards as set out in your document. Should situations arise that cause discontent, the library should find support from its overseers if the procedures in the policy have been followed. The policy should be renewed and revised on a regular basis to keep up with changes in the community. A statement in the policy should be included which provides an idea of how often this may occur. For example, from the Eugene Public Library:

> This collection policy will be reviewed annually by collection development staff and the Library Board.

How to Write a Collection Development Policy

Writing a policy is time-consuming and requires a lot of consultation and referrals. But, you are not alone in this. There are other rural public librarians who are either going through the process or have just completed it. Contact these people through the listserv to ask for advice and encouragement. In addition, here are some guidelines you might find useful to help you get started writing a policy for your library (if your library does not already have one!):

1. Determine who will write the policy

Collection development policies may be written by committees (in larger libraries) or by individuals in smaller libraries. In some cases, the Library Board selects who should write the policy. No matter who writes the policy, outside input should be solicited during the writing process to make sure that the policy reflects the

collection goals of the library and the community.

2. Gather data
Pull together all of the data you can about your community, focusing on their information needs. It is also important to have a clear understanding of your collection's strengths and weaknesses.

3. Write the policy
Address the relevant components of the collection development policy. Think carefully about the statements presented in the policy and how your library constituents will perceive them. The collection development policy can be a public relations tool for your library, as well as your protection against questions about library's collection practices.

4. Get the policy approved
Once your policy is complete and thoroughly revised and edited, it is time to get it approved by your local officials, so you can be sure of their backing in times of controversy.

5. Revise your policy
It is critical to review your policy on a regular basis to make sure it reflects current practices and procedures in your library.

Resources for Librarians

Rapid City Collection Development Policy
http://www.rcgov.org/pdfs/Library/Collection_Development_Policy.pdf

Grand Island Public Library (NE) Collection Development Policy
http://www.gi.lib.ne.us/policies.html

Tippecanoe (Indiana) County Public Library Collection Management Policy
http://www.tcpl.lib.in.us/admin/collman.htm

Watertown Selection Policy
http://www.watertownsd.us/index.aspx?nid=327

Chapter 3

Community Needs Assessment

Areas covered

- What a Needs Assessment Study Can Do for You
- Performing a Needs Assessment
- Resources for Librarians

As a librarian in a small rural public library, you probably already base your selection decisions on what you know about your users' tastes and backgrounds. If you are involved in community activities and events, you will be familiar with your town's socioeconomic make-up. A full-scale needs assessment, like the one outlined here, will probably not be necessary. Since this can be both an expensive and time-consuming exercise, you can breathe a sigh of relief! However, you may find it useful to familiarize yourself with the process. Should you feel that there is a need to carry out a needs assessment, this section helps you decide how best to go about it and what you can expect to gain from doing one. By following the steps outlined here, you can help organize your study and reduce both time and costs.

What a Needs Assessment Study Can Do for You

A needs assessment determines how well your library is currently meeting the needs of your community and what other types of resources and services it can provide in the future. Results of a needs assessment study can be used to determine:

- How extensively the collection is being used and to identify gaps
- Who uses the library and ways to reach non-users
- How successful library services are and how they can be improved to reflect the community's needs
- Whether the space and physical building are adequate for providing library services
- How the user community is changing (e.g., socioeconomic status, demographics, etc.)
- Whether staffing patterns and library hours are adequate.

If your library has never carried out a needs assessment (or does so on an infrequent basis), performing one can be a major undertaking. The level and intensity of the exercise depends on your particular library and community. If the demographics of your community change regularly, you need to assess it more often; a more stable community may not require frequent assessments.

Performing a Needs Assessment

Once you decide to undertake a needs assessment study, you must plan your strategy. The four steps to the needs assessment process require that you determine who will

conduct the study, what kind of information needs to be collected, how the information will be collected, and how the information will be used.

Who Will Conduct the Study?
The first step in performing a needs assessment is to decide who will conduct the study. A needs assessment study can be carried out by outside consultants, library volunteers, or library staff. Your available resources, time frame, and comfort level with performing research may influence your decision. There are advantages and disadvantages that must be evaluated and these are reviewed in this section.

Outside consultants
have expertise in how to conduct research studies. They provide objectivity in the needs assessment process by offering an outsider's view. Since consultants are experienced at performing research, this option makes better use of your limited time. The primary disadvantage to using outside consultants is the cost! Consultants are your most expensive option.

Volunteers from the community
are another possibility. Volunteers provide several advantages: they don't cost anything (or very little if you offer them a small stipend for their time) and they save library staff time. One of the disadvantages in using volunteers to help with needs assessments is that they may present a biased interpretation of what the community needs; thus, it is important to select volunteers who reflect a broad array of the community. In addition, it may be difficult to find volunteers who are willing to devote their time to this process and who have experience in performing research.

Library staff
can also perform needs assessments. While library staff are less expensive than hiring outside consultants, many library staff are inexperienced in research methods and do not have the time to perform a needs assessment on top of their regular library responsibilities. If the needs assessment becomes an in-house activity, it is important to offer adequate compensation in terms of reducing the staff member's other work responsibilities.

You need to weigh the pros and cons for each method and decide what will be the most effective approach for your library. Often, budget is the major factor restricting the choices. It may be a good idea to use a combination of these methods. For example, you might hire an outside consultant to help you set up the needs assessment study, but then use volunteers to actually implement the study. Dividing the responsibilities in creative ways might help in performing a cost-effective needs assessment.

What Kind of Information Will Be Collected?
The second step in performing a needs assessment is to decide what you hope

to learn about your community and what kind of information you plan to collect. For example, do you hope to perform a broad-based study or one that is focused on a particular area? Some of the categories of information you might be interested in collecting include:

Historical Development:
To help you understand how the community became what it is today and to provide insight into the kinds of resources to collect and weed.

Geographical and Transportation Information:
To help you understand your community's growth patterns and population distribution.

Political and Legal Factions:
To help you decide strategies for community-based selection.

Demographic Data (e.g., age characteristics, size, race, and transience of the population):
To help you recognize the demographics of your community and identify population distribution changes.

Economic Data:
To help you identify your community's economic base.

Social, Cultural, Educational and Recreational Organizations:
To help you determine your community's values and social patterns.

How Will the Information Be Collected?

Now that you have decided on the types of information you want to collect about your community, you need to determine how to collect that information. You can collect data by interviewing key informants in the community, holding a community forum, researching social indicators/demographic information from public records and reports, and performing field surveys. It is best if you can use more than one of these data collection methods in combination. However, most libraries don't have the necessary budgetary and staff resources to use more than one method. These data collection methods are discussed further below.

Key Informants
Key informants of the community (also known as "gatekeepers") are people who hold socially responsible positions (such as educators, public officials, clergy and business representatives), or are active in community events. Key informants, by virtue of their positions in the community, have wide contact with people in the community; typically community members turn to key informants for help in answering their questions. By interviewing key informants, you can get a better understanding of their impressions of the library needs of the community. However, this method provides subjective data since it is based on opinions that may not reflect the needs of the entire community.

Community Forum
Another data collection option is to hold a community forum. A community forum involves holding a group event that may include the entire community. It is a good idea to include as many as possible of the people who use (or potentially could use) your resources to help decide what should be available in your library. Community forums can give visibility to your library and raise its status within the community. However, these forums require lots of planning and publicity. The majority of the attendees will probably be active library users, rather than those who do not use the library frequently or at all. This can make it difficult to determine how to encourage non-library users to use the library, which is one of the reasons you are probably doing the needs assessment in the first place! Another disadvantage of this method is that it tends to provide subjective and impressionistic data about the community's needs.

Public Records
A more objective method of data collection is to use public records (such as the national Census) to find out the social indicators or demographics of your community. Using these techniques, research has found several factors (e.g., age, gender, education level, income level, locality, marital status) that tend to contribute to library use (from Evans, 1995):

- Library use decreases with age.
- Women use libraries more than men.
- Library use increases when people have more education, until the post graduate level; library use decreases when people reach the post graduate level.
- Library use is low when people have a low income or a high income.
- The greater the distance people must travel to get to the library, the less they use the library.
- Couples with children use the library more. You can determine these and other traits in your community from public records, which can help you identify needs for your community and encourage greater participation.

Surveys
Surveys and questionnaires involve asking individuals in the community about their library needs. Surveys can be implemented in several ways:

- Mailing questionnaires to randomly selected members of the community (or in small communities, to all households)
- Performing telephone surveys
- Handing out surveys while people are in the library
- Posting questionnaires on your public access computer catalog (if your library has one).

Response rates vary depending on the method used. For example, mailed surveys tend to have the lowest response rates while surveys performed over the telephone tend to have higher participation rates. While mailed surveys are the most expensive option and get low response rates, the mailed survey method requires very little time to implement and is easy to coordinate. It is standard

practice to provide confidentiality to your survey participants; reassuring your participants that their survey responses will be kept confidential might help improve your response rates, especially in a small community.

Information gathered from surveys is only as good as the questions that are asked; thus, the phrasing of survey questions is a very important consideration and can have a tremendous impact on the results you get. In addition to the way the question is phrased, survey questions can be formatted in several ways: as open ended questions that require the participant to write in a response, as fixed alternative questions that ask participants to select one of the presented options, or as closed questions that require participants to answer yes or no. Each of these formats has advantages and disadvantages; how you phrase and format these questions must be carefully considered. It is always a good idea to pretest your questions to help identify flaws in the question format. You might also want to solicit help from an experienced survey researcher at this stage, if you are performing the needs assessment yourself.

How Will the Information Be Used?

In order to make use of the information you have collected, the results have to be interpreted. To interpret the data, some statistical analyses are often applied to identify what the majority of the community feels are the most important needs. An important feature of the results should be a reflection of whether the current goals of the library are meeting (and will continue to meet) the needs of the community. Is the library collecting for the present needs of the community or for past needs, or is it acquiring items to satisfy its staff? When the data analysis is complete, it should be possible to produce a rank-ordered list of the most important changes identified by the community; this ranking can be used to set budget priorities. At the end of this process, it is a good idea to share your findings with the community in some way: holding a group meeting, creating displays at the library, or writing articles to appear online or in the local newspapers.

Resources for Librarians

"**Analyzing community information needs: a holistic approach**," by Lynn Westbrook. *Library Administration & Management* 14, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 26-30.

"**An assessment of library services for a culturally diverse population**," by Ginger Bryan. *Louisiana Libraries* 63, no. 3 (Winter 2001): 14-17.

"An Assessment of Web Accessibility Knowledge and Needs at Oregon Community Colleges," by Jennifer P. Wisdom, Nathan A. White and Kimberley A. Goldsmith. *Community College Review* 33, no. 3/4 (Spring 2006): 19-37.

"**Can you do a community assessment without talking to the community?**," by Robert L. Williams, and Kim Yanoshik. *Journal of Community Health* 26, no. 4 (August 2001): 233-47.

"**Community Analysis and Needs Assessment**," By Salvador Guereza. *Latino Librarianship: A Handbook for Professionals*, Jefferson, NC: McFarlane and Company, 1990. pp. 17-23.

"**Community indicators, genuine progress, and the golden billion**," by Kathleen de la Pena McCook and Kristin Brand. *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (Summer 2001): 337-40.

"**Community Partnerships**," by Nann Blaine Hilyard. *Public Libraries* 43, no. 3 (May/June 2004): 147-52.

"**Engaging Your Community: A Strategy for Relevance in the Twenty-First Century**," by Susan Hildreth. *Public Libraries* 46, no. 3 (May/June 2007): 7-9.

"**How Will This Serve the Community? Deciding Who Can Speak at Your Library**," by Debora Susan Shon. *Public Libraries* 45, no. 6 (November/December 2006): 8-13.

"**Libraries and the Community**," by Charles W. Robinson. *Public Libraries* 1983, 22(1): 7-13.

"**One with the Community**," by Marylaine Block. *Library Journal (1976)* 132, no. 14 (September 2007): 52.

"**Researching Local Organizations: Simple Strategies for Building Social Capital**," by Jeanetta Drueke. *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 327-33.

"**Segmenting the Library Market, Reaching Out to the User Community by Reaching Across the Organization**," by Charles Forrest. *Georgia Library Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 4-7.

"**Serve your Community: Give Them a Piece of Your Mind**," by Kat Davis. *OLA Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 27-8.

"**Ways of Knowing: Community Information-Needs Analysis**," by Lea Worcester and Lynn Westbrook. *Texas Library Journal* 80, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 102, 104-7.

What's Good? Describing Your Public Library's Effectiveness, by Thomas A. Childers, Nancy A. Van House. Chicago. American Library Association: 1993.

"**Who's Using the Public Library**," by Jim Scheppke. *Library Journal* 119 (October 15, 1994): 36.

Chapter 4

Selection of Library Resources

Areas covered:

Basis for Selection of Various Types of Library Materials

A. Books
   1. Overview
   2. Selection Philosophies
   3. How to Be a Good Selector
   4. Selection Criteria in General
   5. Resources for Librarians

B. Audiovisual Materials
   1. Overview
   2. Selection Philosophies
   3. How to Be a Good Selector
   4. Selection Criteria in General
   5. Resources for Librarians

C. Periodicals
   1. Overview
   2. Selection Philosophies
   3. How to Be a Good Selector
   4. Selection Criteria in General
   5. Resources for Librarians

D. Licensed Databases and Indexes
   1. Overview
   2. Selection Philosophies
   3. How to Be a Good Selector
   4. Selection Criteria in General
   5. Resources for Librarians

E. Electronic Resources

Basis for Selection

Selection is at the heart of the collection development process. This core function builds the library's collection for a particular user community. Skill, knowledge, and the right tools are required to select appropriate library materials that meet the needs of the community. It is challenging to build a balanced collection that meets the needs of your user community. How do you decide which resources to select, or what formats your users will need? You may want to keep in mind the five laws of S. R. Ranganathan (one of the leading thinkers in the field of library science), which he laid out in his 1952 book, *Library Book Selection*:

Books are for use.
Every reader his book.
Every book its reader.
Save the reader's time.
A library is a growing organism.

This section presents background on selection philosophies, provides tips on how to be a good selector, and identifies general selection criteria that should help in making selection decisions for your library.

Selection Philosophies

Competing selection philosophies ("quality vs. demand") have been debated for a long time in the library profession and complicate selection in public libraries. This debate pits selection based on customer preferences ("demand") against selection based on quality materials ("quality").

The "demand" argument says that since public libraries are funded by taxpayers, libraries should provide taxpayers with the types of materials they want. A collection based on "demand" may result in more "best seller" reading materials and other materials that are heavily influenced by popular culture rather than the "classics." Some argue that this type of collection will draw people into the library since the library contains the type of materials that satisfy the community's interests. Then, once you have the library users in the library, you can help "raise" their literary level by providing annotated bibliographies in different subject areas that may expand their horizons.

The "quality" argument says that a public library should be a "people's university," providing people with materials to help them better themselves. All resources should be geared toward improving the cognitive level of its user community. However, this perspective suggests that there is a set of "best" resources. It is hard to agree on what the "best" resources are, since any two people are likely to disagree on what is "best." Some argue that a library basing selection solely on "quality" may end up with fewer users because people can't find what they want.

In some senses, this is an artificial debate since most public libraries are going to strive for a mix of the two selection philosophies. Your ultimate goal is to provide a balanced collection that meets the needs of your community.

How to Be a Good Selector

Some people say that selection is an art. However, there are some practical activities you can do to help you become a good selector. In general, to be a good selector, you need to keep track of the trends and events occurring in the publishing fields, to understand your community, and to be aware of current events and popular culture trends.

These pointers are explained in greater depth below. First, you should stay abreast of what is going on in the publishing trade. You can accomplish this by doing the following:

- Read reviews by a variety of reputable reviewers.
- Be aware of which publishers have the best/worst reputations.
- Preview materials whenever possible.
- Consult trade and national bibliographies.

Second, you must know your community and know it well! Be aware of the following factors:

- What are the different reading levels represented in your community?
- What are the main occupational groups, hobbies, recreational activities, and businesses in your community?
- What is the socioeconomic status of the people in your community?
- What is the mean age of people in your community?
- What is the education level of your community?
- What are the ethnic groups (for language considerations) represented in your community?

Third, it is critical to be aware of what is going on in the world. In particular, you should keep yourself informed of current events and popular culture trends. Reading newspapers is a good way to keep informed of world and cultural events. Some current issues that may influence your buying decisions include: What are the popular TV shows? What topics are the chat shows and radio discussing? What are the current best sellers? Are there any authors visiting the area?

Selection Criteria in General

General criteria to consider when you are involved in making selection decisions include subject matter, construction quality, potential use, relation to the collection, bibliographic considerations, and cost. For more detailed criteria by material format, see the sections addressing selection of library materials for Books, Audiovisual Materials, Periodicals, and Electronic Resources. General selection criteria are explained further below:

Subject Matter

- What subjects do you need to collect in to build up your collection?
- How suitable is the subject, style, and reading level of an item for your user community?
- How accurate is the information?

Construction Quality

- Is the item well made and durable?
- For books and periodicals, does the item have good print quality? Is the paper of appropriate quality?
- For audio-visuals, will the item stand up to multiple use?

Potential Use

- What will the demand for the material be?
- What level of use justifies its acquisition?
- How relevant is the item to the community?

Relation to the Collection

- How will the item strengthen the library's collection? (Will it fill a gap, complement something that's already there, or provide an alternative opinion to what is already covered?)
- Are the materials available elsewhere in the community?
- Is there fair coverage of opposing viewpoints?

Bibliographic Considerations

- What is the reputation of the publisher?
- Is the type of publication and the format appropriate for your library?
- What is the reputation and/or significance of the author?
- What do the book reviews say about the item?

Cost

All libraries have limited budgets and have to make very careful decisions about how to allocate these funds during the selection process. One approach to the selection process is to rank the materials desired for selection. More expensive items that are ranked highly might still be purchased, but then the library would probably be unable to purchase as many items. These decisions can be difficult to make, but prioritizing your needs is always a good way to start.

Books

So many books, so little time -- and never enough money to spend on them! A balanced book collection should represent the diverse recreational, informational, self-help, and educational interests of the community. The challenge lies in choosing the right books (among the thousands of fiction and non-fiction books published each year) that will satisfy the needs of the community without going over budget. This section addresses the primary selection considerations, selection criteria, and selection tools for books to help you make tough selection decisions.

Selection Considerations

Selection considerations are those things that the selector keeps in mind about the library, the present collection and the community. Libraries don't exist in vacuums, and selectors have to keep in mind what is going on. These things may be called environmental or situational factors. Some of the things that selectors always have in the backs of their minds are:

- to get the best quality item to serve the most people at the best price.
- to select materials that complement what is already in the collection—books that present different viewpoints, or that present information that isn't already

in the collection, or that present information in a different way than the materials already in the collection do.

- to consider the interests and needs of community members.
- to buy fiction that is considered literary or “classic” as well as popular reading. While there should be some balance in your collection (depending on your collection goals and the interests of your local community), deciding how much money to allocate for these different resources can be tricky.
- to select non-fiction books (particularly reference materials), that can answer the majority of your community's questions, especially those questions that may not be well-answered by Internet resources.

Evaluation Criteria for Book Selection

Fiction and various kinds of nonfiction may be evaluated differently. Evaluation of fiction is likely to be based on your Selection Considerations, such as:

- Is your community particularly interested in the novels of certain authors?
- Are the reading selections of your community influenced by media? Are books that have been made into films popular? Do community members follow recommendations heard over the radio, TV talk shows, or best seller lists?
- Are there classic works of fiction that you feel are important for your collection?
- Does your library try to buy all the titles in series?
- Do the schools in your community require students to read certain books?

Then you will consider the merits of each work of fiction.

Evaluation of non-fiction, particularly reference materials, is typically based on the following criteria:

Nonfiction Evaluation Criteria

Authority
Who is the author, who is the publisher, and what expertise does the author have in the subject matter?

Currency
How current is the material? Are there other sources that are more current? Would this book duplicate information in another, already owned source?

Scope
What subject area does the source cover? Is it a broad or specific treatment of the subject?

Interest
How interesting is the source? Does the source have the potential for being heavily used in the library?

Organization
How is the book laid out? Can you easily find information in the source? Does it have appropriate access points, indexes, and cross-references?

Format
What is the quality of the binding and the paper (acid-free is preferred)? How readable is the print?

Special Features
Does the book have important illustrations or other features that would make it valuable?

Cost
How much does it cost? Are there other comparable sources that are less expensive?

Accuracy
Is the information in the source accurate? Would experts in the subject agree that it is a good source?

Impartiality
Is the source a balanced treatment of the subject matter? If the book does not have a balanced treatment, does your book collection address differing viewpoints? For further discussion on balance, consult the Intellectual Freedom section of this course.

Selection Tools

There are many sources that provide assistance to the librarian in selecting books. Some of these selection tools provide evaluative information and are selective in nature, while other tools are more comprehensive lists of books available for purchase.

Evaluative Resources

Some book selection tools are selective, that is, they list books based on some criteria (such as sales) or provide critical evaluations of the books. These selective resources can be especially helpful in making book selection decisions. Included in this category are book reviews, "best of" lists, and subject lists.

Book Reviews

One of the most important sources of information for book selection is the book review. Book reviews provide descriptive and evaluative information that can be used in place of physically examining the actual book. A well-written review also makes comparisons to similar works to help you determine whether the book being reviewed should be added to your collection. To be a good consumer of book reviews, you should be aware of the goal of the reviewer (is it to promote, announce, describe, or evaluate a new book?), the source of the book review (is it in a reputable reviewing source that is impartial?), and the authority of the reviewer. In small- and medium-sized public libraries, the most often used authoritative book review sources are ***Booklist***, published by the American Library Association, and ***Library Journal***.

Many reputable review sources are now making current review available on the Internet. There are several mega-lists of book review web sites. ***AcqWeb's Directory of Book Reviews on the Web*** provides an extensive list of review sources on the Internet, however the list is no longer being maintained. More and more often, commentary from readers posted on various kinds of Websites, such as Amazon, and on Blogs provide information and evaluation on fiction, although these “consumer reviews” must be read with a librarian’s especial skepticism.

While book reviews provide a tremendous service (for who can possibly examine each book in depth?), they do have some limitations and should not be used as the only selection aid. One limitation is the length of time it takes for book reviews to be published; in some cases, book reviews appear several months after the book's publication date. Other limitations are that only a small fraction of books are actually reviewed, many books are reviewed in only one source, and book publications from small presses often do not get reviewed in the major reviewing sources. Given these limitations, there will be numerous worthwhile books that are never reviewed.

"Best of" and Recommended Lists

Not all book purchases are made when a title is first published. You may decide to wait to select some of your materials until after the annual compilations of award-winners and “best books.” These "best of" lists can also be used as checklists to make sure you did not miss any particularly good books. The American Library Association announces the **ALA Award Winners for books and other materials** on an annual basis (usually in January). This list includes the Newbery Award, the

Caldecott Award, and Notable Books, among many others. The Golden Sower awards are listed on the Web. You can also find links to lists of award-winning fiction at ***Bookspot*** and at ***Bookwire*****.** Another list of awards for books is available through **Amazon**. Finally, some library patrons are particularly interested in reading from lists of recommended books, such as Oprah's Recommended Books (***Oprah's Book Club*****).** If you know that your library community's reading choices are influenced by recommendations, you may want to consider recommended lists in your book selection process.

Subject Lists

For nearly every subject area, there are lists (bibliographies) that include works considered vital to that subject area. These subject lists can be particularly useful if you are trying to build your collection in a particular subject area and if you want to check your collection against a list of quality materials in that subject. Annotated lists of books in particular subjects sometimes appear in the regular reviewing sources. If you plan on using subject lists, it is important to keep in mind that these lists were not compiled with your community needs or collection goals in mind; thus, you must consider the recommendations on these lists in light of your own collection needs.

Comprehensive Resources

Some resources are catalogs or directories of books available for purchase. These tools can be useful for verifying the bibliographic and purchasing information for a book, for identifying new book publications, for facilitating the purchasing and ordering process, and for keeping up with publishing trends. Included in the category are publisher sources, online bookstores, directories of in print and out of print books, and national bibliographies.

Publisher Sources

Publishers often send catalogs, flyers, and announcements to libraries to publicize their books and other publications. You can use these publisher sources to keep up with new book publications that may be useful for your library. However, it is important to remember that publisher's catalogs are sales tools. The information they include about their books is going to present those books in their best light. Checking reviews before buying titles that the catalogs have made sound irresistible is a smart selection practice.

You can request print copies of publisher catalogs (which will automatically put you on their mailing lists) or you can see many publisher catalogs and other publisher information on the Web. In most cases, publisher Web sites will have the most current information about their publications.

- ***AcqWeb's Directory of Publishers and Vendors*** provides links, organized by publishing category, to publisher and vendor sites on the Internet.
- ***Publishers' Catalogues Home Page*** offers an extensive list of publishers from around the world with links to publisher web sites.
- ***BookWire*** includes information about the book publishing industry, book reviews, and annotated links to book-related sites.

Online Bookstores
The publishing world has embraced online as a sales venue. Online bookstores can provide you with a quick and easy way to find publication information for a wide range of books. They also provide added value with lists of best-sellers, award-winners, and excerpts from review sources. Check out

- ***Amazon.com***
- ***Barnes and Noble***
- ***AbeBooks.com.***

Book jobbers—middlemen—also have an online presence and offer libraries many services beside what are essentially online bookstores for libraries.

- ***Baker & Taylor***
- ***Ingram***

Directories for In Print Books and Out Of Print Books
There are several sources for finding bibliographic and purchasing information for books that are available for purchase, are about to be published, or are no longer being printed. To find information about books that are about to be published, you can read publisher's announcements, refer to standard reference sources like *Forthcoming Books,* look at Baker & Taylor and Ingram's catalogs, or search publisher and online bookstore Websites. To find information on books that are currently in print, you can refer to ***Books in Print*** (available online through NebraskAccess). For out-of-print books, you can consult ***WorldCat*** to find titles and information, and search ***AbeBooks.com*** and other O.P. dealers to find if titles are available for purchase.

National Bibliographies
OCLC and FirstSearch have made it possible to see how many libraries own a particular title, and to check if a library similar to yours (benchmark) has a particular title. You can do serious bibliographic research, you can borrow a book and examine it to see if you want to purchase it, you can coordinate your high-ticket purchases with those of neighboring libraries and cooperate to offer your users a better collection than your libraries could offer individually. First Search is available to Nebraska libraries through the Nebraska Library Commission's NebraskAccess.

Resources for Librarians
AbeBooks.com
http://www.abebooks.com/

AcqWeb's Directory of **Book Reviews on the Web**
http://acqweb.org/bookrev.html

AcqWeb's Directory of Publishers and Vendors
http://acqweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/pubr.html

ALA Award Winners for books and other materials
http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=bookmediaawards

Amazon.com
http://www.amazon.com

Baker and Taylor
http://www.btol.com/

Barnes and Noble
http://www.barnesandnoble.com/

Book Selection: An Introduction to Principles and Practice, (4th ed.), by David Spiller. Clive Bingley Ltd. London: 1986.

Booklist
http://www.ala.org/ala/booklist/booklist.htm

Books In Print
http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/nebraskaccess/

Bookwire
http://www.bookwire.com/bookwire/

Building Library Collections, (6th ed.), by Arthur Curley and Dorothy Broderick. The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Metuchen, NJ: 1985.

Collection Development for Libraries , by G. E Gorman, B.R. Howes. Bowker-Saur. London: 1989.

Developing Library and Information Center Collections, by G. Edward Evans. Libraries Unlimited, Inc. Englewood, CO: 1995.

Ingram
http://www.ingrambook.com/

Internet Public Library
http://www.ipl.org/

Library Journal Digital
http://www.libraryjournal.com/

New York Times Book Review
http://www.nytimes.com/pages/books/

Oprah's Book Club
http://www.oprah.com/books/books_landing.jhtml

Audiovisual Materials

This section addresses selection of audiovisual materials. Some of the materials that are included in this category are audiobooks, video recordings, and music CDs.

Providing information and entertainment are part of the mission of a library, and those come in many formats. Changing technologies can make selection decisions difficult (and expensive!). Beta has given way to VHS, which has been superseded by DVD, which now seems destined to be overtaken soon by downloadable files. The library would prefer not to make large expenditures for materials that will soon be obsolete, but also wishes to provide materials in the formats that community members wish to use.

While there is no way to predict the next technology that will dominate the market, this section provides some general selection criteria for audiovisual materials that should help ease the decision-making process and then discusses specific selection issues and tools by audiovisual category.

Selection Criteria

When selecting audiovisual materials, the library's collection development policies and the general selection criteria listed above under "Books" are still the main points to consider. However, the specialized formats of audiovisual materials make some additional considerations necessary. Some criteria to consider when selecting audiovisual materials include:

- The amount of your budget that is allocated for audiovisual materials (the cost per audiovisual item is greater than for print materials).
- The durability of the item (how well it is manufactured).
- The visual and audio quality of the item.
- The ease of repairing the item if it is damaged and the procedures for handling damage caused by patrons.
- The type of equipment required for hearing or viewing the audiovisual material.
- The likelihood that the audiovisual technology is long-lasting.

Consider the primary users of the materials and the main purpose of your collection. It is a good idea to involve people in your community (perhaps a community-based committee) in the selection process for audiovisual materials; multiple opinions help avoid costly mistakes. In addition to soliciting community input, previewing audiovisual materials is highly desirable. However, previewing is time-consuming, and may involve previewing fees.

Video Recordings (DVD)

Video recordings are extremely popular with library patrons. Not only do they provide entertainment to library users, but also can serve as educational, cultural, and informational aids. It is important that librarians are aware of copyright and censorship issues related to video materials.

Some of the selection considerations for videos include (Evans, 1995; Handman, 1994):

- Are the production values of the program high?
- How does your library's DVD collection complement the selection of your local video store?
- What types of equipment do members of your community have? What is the demand for particular formats?

To help you make selection decisions for video recordings

- read reviews on these materials
- join the mailing lists of video publishers and distributors
- whenever possible, preview them for quality and content.

You can find reviews of videos both in print sources and on the Internet. Examples of print sources that include reviews of videos are *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, *Video Librarian*, *Video Review*, *Video Source Book* and *Film and Video Finder*. An excellent Internet site with a comprehensive list of video producers and distributors can be found at
Film & Video Distributors & Producers.
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/Distributors.html

Audio Materials (Compact Discs, Audio Books)
Audio materials have been a very important commodity for library collections throughout most of this century and include musical productions, books on tape, and language learning, as well as lectures, instructions, and inspirational messages. The most common format today is compact disc (CD), but downloadable files are becoming more popular

Some of the issues to consider when selecting audio materials, especially audio books, include:

- How will your audio collection support your library's goals?
- Will your audio collection focus on all or only certain genres?
- Will you collect complete works or abridged versions? Does abridging the work affect the story?
- Are the production values of the recording high?
- Is the format supported by equipment owned by members of the community?

Reviews of audio materials appear in print resources, such as *Publisher's Weekly*, *AudioFile*, *Library Journal*, *Audiobook Review* and *Parent's Choice*. A list of audiobook publishers is available at the Audio Publishers Association Website.

Reviews of musical recordings can be viewed on the Internet at: **Booklist** and **Globe Records** (for "unusual or hard to find" music at "discount prices").

Resources for Librarians

Audio Publishers Association
http://www.audiopub.org

Booklist
http://www.ala.org/ala/booklist/booklist.htm

Periodicals

The periodicals collections in small- and medium-sized public libraries have undergone great changes in the last decade. Periodicals used to be received, carefully guarded, and saved—sometimes for many, many years. The information in the periodicals was accessed through indexes, such as the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*. But indexes moved from print to electronic formats. Electronic indexes opened the way for the index itself to present electronic copies of articles. Today, many users of the electronic periodicals files in libraries wouldn't dream of looking up a bibliographic citation in an index, finding the correct volume of a periodical on the shelf, and copying the article they need, or taking notes on it. The public library user expects an electronic index that provides full text of the articles listed.

Subscriptions to periodicals still fulfill the needs for current information of newspaper and magazine readers, but they may not necessarily be slated to help coming generations of library users do research. This can make choosing which periodicals to include in your library's collection a much easier task, since you are selecting materials that people will find useful or interesting or entertaining to read now and in the near future. Except in rare cases, considered a little later, periodicals will be retained for a fairly short period of time.

Selection Issues

Periodicals still require quite a bit of staff time, shelf space, and maintenance, so their total costs to the library are quite a bit higher than the costs of yearly subscriptions. Therefore selection of periodicals requires careful consideration. Typical methods for evaluating the library's periodicals needs include compiling written or verbal user requests for new subscriptions and keeping track of ILL requests for periodical titles, as well as checking standard "recommended" lists such as *Magazines for Libraries*. The ultimate goal is to build a periodical collection that addresses both the general needs of the community and some of the more specialized interests and needs (such as Spanish-language periodicals or large-print versions of popular titles for an elderly community).

Indexes

Because subject access to the articles in periodicals is usually only available through indexes, it is important to earmark a part of the periodicals budget for indexes—today generally Web-based services that provide full text of articles as well as index information. Some periodicals, such as *Consumer Report* or *National Geographic* have their own indexes, but many popular periodicals rely on inclusion in one of the electronic indexing services.

Your local newspaper may not have any index at all—and many public libraries undertake to index the local paper, or at least the obituaries from the local paper. As more newspapers are made available full-text online (since typesetting is almost all electronic these days, newspapers are available in digital format at some point in their printing process) the need for indexing has lessened.

Back Issues and Claims
If an issue of a periodical doesn't come, it may be necessary to claim a missing issue. It is a good idea to file claims for missing issues as soon as possible since there may be a limited supply of extra issues. If your library orders its periodicals through a subscription service, such as Ebsco, the service will have its own claims procedures.

If issues of older periodicals disappear from the library, or the library wishes to acquire older issues to fill in holes in a volume of a periodical, the library will generally have to turn to sources for second-hand periodicals. For more information about back issues and related services, visit **Back Issues and Exchanges**; this site lists back issues and exchange services that may be freely offered through the Internet.

Changes in Periodicals and Renewals
One of the biggest challenges to working with periodicals is how often they change! Periodicals often change titles or focus, split into parts (A, B, C), merge with another title, etc. Given the frequency of periodical changes, it is a good idea to regularly review the library's periodical subscriptions to make sure that they still meet the library's needs. This is especially critical if you place your periodical subscriptions on a standing order with a serials vendor or on an automatic renewal basis directly with the publisher.

Selection Criteria
Periodicals should be selected to meet the reading interests and information needs of your user community and should also complement the other library collections. Determining whether the periodical under consideration is suitable for your library is easier if you use a systematic evaluation checklist. Some questions you might include in a checklist are:

- **Purpose, Scope and Audience.** What is the purpose of the periodical, what does the periodical actually include, and who is the intended audience? This can be determined by examining the table of contents, the range of writers, authors, and editors, and the vocabulary used in the articles.
- **Accuracy.** How accurate is the material in the periodical? It should be factually correct and relatively objective. This can be determined by evaluating the writers, the publisher, and the subject matter. For more technical periodicals, an expert opinion is a good idea.
- **Local Interest.** Does the title have some interest to the local community?
- **Format Issues.** What is the quality of the printing and the paper? Are illustrations of good quality? Do there seem to be more ads than text?
- **Indexing.** Is the title indexed in a service to which the library subscribes?
- **Cost.** How much does the subscription cost? Will back issues be needed? If so, how much will it cost to bind them or obtain them on microform?
- **Demand.** Will a title be used enough to justify subscription?

- **Availability.** Is the title readily available through interlibrary loan or from a library with which you have a resource sharing agreement?

Selection Tools
Selecting periodicals can be difficult because reviews of periodicals are not plentiful and because the stakes are so high in terms of the costs and commitment required. If you are unsure of a periodical, most publishers are willing to send you a sample issue to examine and show to the prospective users in your library. For information to help you make selection decisions for periodicals, there are some library magazines and journals that provide reviews of periodical titles (for example, *Library Journal* and *New Magazine Review*). If you are interested in adding an established magazine (rather than a new magazine) to your collection, *Magazines for Libraries* selectively lists and annotates approximately 7,000 "best" magazines for libraries and can be used to build your periodicals subscriptions in a particular subject area. While not directly related to selecting serials, there are many useful serials sites and sources available at ***Tools for Serials Catalogers*****.** Some of the selection tools discussed in this section include selective guides to periodicals, directories of periodicals and newspapers, publisher catalogs, and periodical lists.

Directories of Periodicals and Newspapers
To find subscription information and sometimes brief descriptions of periodicals and newspapers, there are several standard reference sources. These sources aim at being comprehensive rather than selective and are published on an annual basis. *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory* (R.R. Bowker) and the *Serials Directory* (EBSCO) provide subscription information for periodicals published worldwide, arranged by subject; Ulrich's is updated a few times during the year. *Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media* (Gale Research) identifies newsletters and newspapers (as well as other types of publications) by geographic region.

Resources for Librarians
Ebsco Subscription Services
http://www.ebsco.com/home/printsubs/default.asp

Magazine Selection: How to Build a Community-Oriented Collection*,* by Bill Katz. RR Bowker Company, New York: 1971.

Magazines for libraries: for the general reader and school, junior college, college, university, and public libraries, 15th ed., edited by Cheryl LaGuardia; created by William A Katz. Bowker, New Providence, N.J.: 2006.

New York Times
http://www.nytimes.com/

Online Serials
http://www.ipl.org/reading/serials/

Licensed Databases and Indexes

Some of the most used, and most expensive, tools that the library makes available to users are not really *in* the library. They are databases and indexes that are licensed or rented by the library and accessed via the Internet. In some ways, this has brought about improvements in products that needed frequent changes and additions, and in physical form were bulky and difficult to use. In other ways, it has meant that libraries have had to pay large fees just to use a product, and if they discontinued, not only future information, but the entire contents of the database were no longer available. These products also require added infrastructure in terms of computer equipment, network software, and staff training and oversight.

Evaluation Criteria for Licensed Resources

Many of the criteria applied to print resources (i.e. authority, currency, intended audience, ease of use, and accuracy) are also appropriate for electronic resources. However, there are unique selection issues to consider for electronic databases. When selecting them, the extensiveness of the content, type of access points, quality of technical support, method of pricing, and conditions of licensing agreements should be considered; these are discussed in more detail below.

Content Considerations

While it is often assumed that electronic and print versions of the same resources are identical, there can be a number of important differences. Some of the issues to consider when considering purchasing or leasing an electronic resource are:

- Does the electronic version have retrospective data? Most electronic sources do not include data prior to the 1970s or 1980s. Many will contain only a certain number of years of data.
- How complete is the electronic database, especially when compared to its print counterpart? Some electronic sources do not include some information because of rights issues.
- Does the electronic resource offer any special features that are not available in the print version? For example, most electronic resources offer multiple access points to the data that are not possible with print resources and some electronic resources can provide full-text.
- How often is the information updated?
- How thorough is coverage?

Access Considerations

When evaluating electronic resources, it is important to consider how these resources will be accessed and what the implications will be for other library services. For example, it is common for libraries that acquire access to an index to experience an increase in the number of interlibrary loan requests for periodical titles they do not own. Other access issues to consider are:

- How many users will the electronic resource accommodate at one time? Will the resource be available to an individual on a single computer terminal, or to multiple users on a LAN (local area network), and/or to remote users from

their home or offices? Your decision on what kind of access to provide will depend on the amount of demand you expect for the resource.

- How can the content of the electronic database be accessed? What types of search options does the resource provide? The user interface and search strategies vary widely from one product to another.

Technical Support Considerations

Sometimes, electronic resources can be intimidating and difficult to use. In order to fully exploit all the features of an electronic resource, users often need demonstration, explanation, and user aids. Technical support issues to consider are:

- How much training will library personnel need to feel comfortable using the product?
- How detailed are the instructions that come with the product? Are there online help screens?
- How reliable is the producer? Has their software been tested and perfected?
- Is the system prone to technical problems? Is the product compatible with existing hardware?
- Is the publisher's technical support helpful and easily accessible when needed?

Cost Considerations

Cost considerations are different for electronic resources than for books. While a book is usually a one-time purchase, most electronic resources represent an ongoing commitment and costs. Licensing agreements must be negotiated. Pricing plans are not standardized. Often databases come in several versions, with different levels of coverage of the material. This makes it hard to compare prices offered by competing vendors for similar electronic products.

Legal Considerations

The library should carefully review licensing terms before purchasing a product, since it is responsible for meeting all the terms of a signed agreement. Different companies and products may have significant variations in licensing agreements, which all staff should know. Agreements often include provisions for payment and delivery of the product, warranties and limits, termination of the agreement, customer service information, and responsibility of the licensee for the security of the product. The library should post signs (similar to those seen at copy machines) to remind users of copyright restrictions.

Selection Tools

Given the many considerations in selecting electronic resources, how do you make informed decisions about which format to purchase and which are quality electronic resources? Data may be more difficult to gather, but the decision-making process is similar to that for any library material.

You

- survey your user needs.
- gather information about various products.

- find out what experts (reviews) have to say about the products in sources such as the *Charleston Advisor.*
- find out what experiences trusted colleagues have had with the products.
- try out the products.
- make a short-term commitment to the product that seems to best fit the situation and which appears to be the best value.
- gather data about how it is being used, what the problems are, how well users seem to like it, etc.

Resources for Librarians¶
AcqWeb's Directory of Publishers and Vendors
http://acqweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/pubr.html

Selection and Evaluation of Electronic Resources*,* by Gail K. Dickinson. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1994.

Electronic Resources
Libraries today hold more than shelves with books. Increasingly, libraries are providing patrons with access to electronic resources, and many resources previously available in an analog format (e.g. audiobooks) are becoming electronic. Even the venerable book has its electronic versions these days, and while paper-and-ink are probably not on their way out, Ebooks probably are in our future. Some electronic resources, such as video games, are new types of materials which weren't even thought of until electronic vehicles made them possible.

These resources are products of relatively new technology that is changing rapidly. Today's hot new item may be obsolete and unwanted in just a few years. The library has to balance the need to be "with it" and to provide library users with new materials and new media they want, with the need to also provide proven and still-desired core services. And so we can say about the new electronics what we said about books, "So many _____ (books, video games, audio books, downloads . . .), so little time -- and never enough money to spend on them!"

Common Sense Media
http://www.commonsensemedia.org/

Electronic Gaming monthly
http://egm.1up.com/

Guide to Researching Video Games
http://www.library.uiuc.edu/gaming/researchguide.html

Chapter 5

Acquisitions

Areas covered:

- Acquiring Books
- Acquiring Other Materials
- Glossary of Commonly Used Terms
- Resources for Librarians

Once materials have been selected by staff or requested by customers, the acquisitions process begins--that is, confirming the details of price and publication, locating the item, ordering it, and processing the item and the paperwork once they arrive. Selection and acquisition may or may not be separate processes, handled in separate departments by different people, depending on the size of the library and its staff.

Although acquisitions procedures may vary depending on the library's mission and resources, all libraries have some goals in common. These include acquiring materials as quickly and economically as possible and minimizing the amount of paperwork, filing and follow-up needed, while maintaining good working relationships with vendors and all others involved in the process. In a small library where only one or two people handle the entire acquisitions process, some strategies work better than others in achieving these goals.

This chapter considers some possible acquisitions strategies, defines commonly used terms, and suggests ways to simplify the acquisitions process using the Web. We also discuss automation as one way to streamline the process. The focus of the discussion is on printed materials, especially books, although we also discuss how to acquire periodicals, audiovisual materials, and electronic resources.

Acquiring Books

While each library will have its own acquisitions processes, there are several basic steps (we list 9) to follow when acquiring books:

1. Collect Orders

In a small library, both staff and customers may request materials on a regular basis. Having a formal request form that gathers bibliographic data and requester data may help streamline the process.

2. Search and Verify Bibliographic Information

Once a request has been received, someone must verify

- that the library does not already own the item, or have it on order
- that the bibliographic information is correct, and
- that the item is available for purchase.

Usually this can be done by searching the library catalog, and the "on order" file, if that file is not incorporated in the library catalog, by searching an online database such as OCLC or WorldCat, and by searching lists of books-for-sale, such as ***Books in Print*** or a jobber's database or Amazon.com*.*

3. Choose an Option for Placing Orders

Should a requested title be ordered from the publisher, a jobber or a bookstore? The decision probably depends on

- what type of item it is (some specialized items can only be obtained from specialized sources,)
- how quickly the item is needed,
- where you can get the best price, and
- which vendor are most likely to provide the best service.

Ordering from vendors

Ordering from vendors, often called jobbers, is often a better choice for small libraries than ordering directly from publishers, since jobbers offer items from many publishers. Jobbers are wholesale companies that purchase items from their producers and then sell them to end users. Two of the largest book jobbers, widely used by libraries, are Baker & Taylor and Ingram. Vendors often offer better discounts than publishers, and they tend to offer services that make the acquisitions process easier for the library. Many vendors provide services such as electronic ordering, approval plans, standing orders, selection profiling, and book leasing plans, and they even provide cataloging and processing services. Some libraries outsource all their technical service tasks to vendors; the additional cost may be well worth the savings in time. Many libraries use more than one vendor to meet their various needs.

It is important to choose and monitor vendors carefully. You should expect a vendor to provide: a large inventory in stock, prompt and accurate order fulfillment, accurate reporting of an order's status, reasonable and competitive discounts, accommodation of the library's needs and policies (especially concerning paperwork) and a range of services that may include cataloging or order plans. (Eaglen, p. 84-85) Your colleagues within your region might be able to provide you with some advice.

Ordering from publishers

Ordering directly from a publisher is often the least effective method for acquiring materials. It is usually the most expensive method, since vendors often offer better discounts, and it can be very time-consuming to track many different policies, schedules, shipments and invoices. There are some cases, however, when going to the publisher makes sense. Publishers often have more accurate or current information on the availability of out-of-stock or not-yet-published materials than wholesalers. Encyclopedia publishers or small independent presses may not offer

materials through wholesalers, and publishers are often the source of choice when an item must be acquired in a hurry.

Purchasing from Bookstores
Purchasing materials at retail bookstores requires a balance between cost and urgency. It may be faster to buy some popular books at a retail bookstore, but the price is likely to be higher than you would pay to a vendor. The large Web-based bookstores, such as Amazon.com have blurred distinctions between retail bookstores and wholesale jobbers.

Second-hand bookstores can be a good source for less current and less expensive books, especially if you can set up a system of credit for donations you are unable to use. A title that is out of print can often be found by a bookstore or vendor specializing in out of print searches, but the process may be lengthy and expensive. The used and out-of-print book trade handles a great deal of its business over the Internet. See AbeBooks.com.

4. Assign a Purchase Order
Purchase orders, each with its own number, can be very helpful in keeping track of acquisitions paperwork. A purchase order number assigned to each order is invaluable if you need to trace, return, dispute or otherwise follow up on orders. Every purchase order should include a unique purchase order number, a shipping address and a billing address (if the addresses are different), specific instructions about the order, identifying bibliographic information for each item ordered, such as an ISBN, and an authorized signature.

5. Place the Order
Libraries may have to conform to purchasing procedures mandated by the institutions or municipalities they are parts of. The details of placing an order depend on your acquisitions system and on the place you are ordering from, but one way or another you have to get the order to the vendor (electronically, by fax or by mail). Telephone ordering offers many opportunities for misunderstandings and forgetfulness, and should be used only under very rare circumstances.

Every order for a book should include complete and accurate bibliographic information. The information is used by the vendor to process the order accurately, and it enables you to move the book into circulation quickly once it's received. The data you should try to include are: title; author's/editor's name (surname first); publisher; format (hardcover, paperback); edition; price (as assigned by publisher); ISBN (very important); how many copies are being ordered; whether the item is a set; a purchase order number; and shipping instructions. It is a good idea to reiterate your cancellation policy on every order. (Eaglen, p.97-98)

For some types of materials, including best-sellers and regularly-published, dated reference books, it is a good idea to place an order six to eight weeks in advance of the publication date. If the books are printed ahead of schedule, you will get them that much sooner; for certain reference books, only limited quantities are printed and a late order may not be filled.

6. Receive Materials

At least 75 percent of each order from a vendor should be received within two weeks. So if you listed, say 8 titles on a purchase order, you should have received 6 of them within a couple of weeks. The rest of the order should be received or cancelled within 90 days. However, you will often have some "open" purchase orders in your files, waiting for one or two items to be completed. Orders from foreign publishers (180 days is reasonable for books from Britain and Western Europe; books from other areas can take much longer, up to a year) and reprint publishers may take longer. Consistent performance below this level is a sign to find a new vendor. Vendors should clearly indicate if any items are on back order or out of stock and when you might expect delivery. They should also notify you if any items are out-of-print or unavailable.

When the materials arrive, they should be examined to be sure that they are what you intended to order, and they should be inspected for damage or defects. Do this before you stamp or process items.

7. Return Books (if necessary)

After you've inspected a shipment, you may find that there are materials that should be returned, including defective books and errors in title, edition or quantity. If you have not processed the book, most vendors will agree to accept it as a return. Make sure that you know what the vendor's policy and procedures are for returns. Anything returned to the vendor should be accompanied by an explanation of the problem and what action is requested (a credit or a replacement book). When negotiating agreements with vendors, be sure to consider their return policy and the needs of your library.

8. Process the Books

Materials should be stamped with library ownership as soon as they have been inspected. If you expect to return or dispute any items, do not process them. Other physical processing, such as bar coding and spine labeling, should follow as soon as possible.

9. Make Payment

When books have been received, do your best to deliver payment within 30 to 60 days of delivery. Some vendors even offer additional discounts for prompt payment. Invoices should be checked carefully for shipment or discount errors before they are paid. Adjustments for returned or undelivered items should be taken into account.

Acquiring Other Materials

While much of the acquisitions process we discussed for books also applies to other materials, there are some differences depending on type of material. We identify some of the acquisitions issues unique to Periodicals, Audiovisual Materials, and Electronic Resources and provide some Internet resources that should help in the acquisitions process.

Periodicals

Libraries are usually faced with two choices in acquiring periodicals: subscribe directly to the publisher for each title or use a jobber. There are a number of jobbers who specialize in serials (e.g. Ebsco); many book jobbers also work with serials. The decision to use a serials jobber or to place subscriptions directly depends on the size of your budget and the number of titles you receive. Using a jobber offers many benefits: placing one order and processing one invoice for multiple subscriptions; automatic renewal; multiple-year subscription rates and discounts; notification of changes in title, publishing frequency and the like; and assistance in making claims for missing or damaged materials. These services are not free, of course. Most jobbers charge a service fee that is dependent on, among other factors, the type and number of titles ordered, how difficult those titles are to manage and the number of reports issued to the library. Service fees should be reasonable and negotiable.

Audiovisual Materials

For the most part, ordering audiovisual materials (microforms, films, videotapes, cassette tapes, audio books, compact disks) is handled like book ordering. Some differences include: libraries often place orders directly with publishers rather than with vendors; preview copies are usually not new copies and are returned to the publisher regardless of whether an order is placed; requests for preview and purchase copies take more time to fulfill; and rental may be a better choice than purchase, depending on anticipated use and processing costs. Another important distinction is that for some formats, particularly film, video and software, the library does not actually "buy" the item. Under legally binding license or usage agreements, the library must agree to certain restrictions on the duplication and/or showing of the items.

Electronic Resources

A library does not typically “acquire” e-resources. Rather, the library pays a fee for library users to use resources that are generally available via the Internet. These resources may be billed as “free” to the users, but it would be more accurate to describe them as “prepaid.” The fees for use of these resources often require that the library negotiate a licensing agreement. Essentially, this is negotiating a legal contract. You must know what your rights and obligations are, and what you will be getting from the vendor. The 3 aspects of a licensing agreement to look at are ownership, access, and use. To see what typical license agreements include, refer to **Publishers' License Agreements** and to **Liblicense.**

Glossary of Commonly Used Terms

Approval plan - An arrangement with a jobber so that libraries automatically receive all materials that match predetermined criteria. It allows the selector to examine the materials before deciding whether to purchase them. They are used most often by large academic libraries.

Back ordered - An order is held by the publisher or vendor until the materials become available. Most libraries instruct publishers and vendors to cancel back orders after a specified period of time (often 90 days).

Blanket order plan - An arrangement with a jobber so that libraries automatically receive all new titles in a subject area or from a specific publisher. These titles are not returnable.

Discount-Often offered by publishers and vendors to libraries**. A Long discount** is typically about 40 to 45 percent, and is offered to vendors by publishers. Long discounts are usually offered on non-technical books that are likely to sell many copies. A **Short discount** is about 10 to 18 percent offered to vendors by publishers. Short discounts are likely to be offered on highly specialized items.

Drop-shipping - A practice in which a vendor serves as middleman for a library but does not stock any books. It is not usually time- or resource-effective.

Encumbering funds - A bookkeeping term; when materials are ordered the expected purchase price is set aside (encumbered) to ensure that funds will be available to pay for the item when it is received.

Firm order - A one-time purchase.

ISBN - International Standard Book Number; used in verifying and placing orders

ISSN - International Standard Serials Number; used in verifying and placing orders

Jobber - A vendor or wholesaler; a company that buys from publishers and sells to libraries and booksellers.

NOP - Not our publication

NYP - Not yet published

OP - Out of print

OS - Out of stock

OSI - Out of stock indefinitely

Return privileges - An arrangement with a jobber so that libraries may return (without charge) materials from approval plans that are not useful to the collection.

Standing order - An arrangement with a publisher so that libraries continue to receive an item until the order is canceled. It is most often used for materials that are regularly published or updated. Materials are usually returnable.

Resources for Librarians
AcqWeb
http://acqweb.library.vanderbiltedu/

Buying Books: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians*,* 2d ed., by Audrey Eaglen. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers: 2000. **(NLC)**

Buying serials: ***a how-to-do-it manual for librarians***, by N Bernard Basch and Judy McQueen. New York. Neal-Schuman: 1990.

IFLA Licensing Principles
http://www.ifla.org/V/ebpb/copy.htm

Liblicence
http://www.library.yale.edu/~llicense/index.shtml

Chapter 6

Weeding

Areas covered in Chapter 6:

- •The Importance of a Weeding Policy
- •Why Weeding Is Necessary
- •Why It Doesn't Get Done
- •Now What
- •Resources for Librarians

If a library works hard to keep its collection fresh and vital by acquiring new materials, then it stands to reason that it must also discard old, worn, dirty, and outdated materials. The idea that a library acquires and stores materials forever may be true for some of the largest research libraries (which keep having to find new buildings to store more and more books), but it is a misconception and a disservice to the small public library.

Weeding (also known as deselection) is a periodic or continual evaluation of resources intended to remove items that are no longer useful from the collection. It is an essential, though difficult, element of collection development that ensures that the collection on the shelves is useful and accessible.

This chapter discusses the importance of having a weeding policy, the rationale behind weeding, some reasons it is difficult to weed, practical information for use in planning or conducting weeding, and options for the materials you remove. When considering weeding in your library, keep in mind that every library is different; every library has unique priorities and problems. Not every suggestion or guideline for weeding in this section will fit your library, so feel free to adapt as necessary.

The Importance of a Weeding Policy

Some members of the public tend to view books—and other library materials—as almost sacrosanct. They may not understand that shabby, dirty books make the library look unkempt, and that unused and unwanted books make it harder for library users to find what they are looking for. Weeding can be controversial, so a carefully prepared and fully documented policy on weeding (as part of your overall collection development policy) can lessen or alleviate misunderstandings. A weeding policy can't replace individual judgment or common sense, but it will make your actions more understandable to the public.

If you haven't already spent some time evaluating your collection and your community while writing your collection development policy, it's a good idea to do so before beginning a weeding project. Knowing what is wanted and needed by your customers makes it easier to decide what should or should not remain in the collection. The Community Needs Assessment and Collection Assessment sections of this notebook offer suggestions for conducting these evaluations.

Why Weeding Is Necessary
Library users need for the library to supply information that is easy to find and up-to-date. When library shelves are full of outdated materials, customers have trouble finding the interesting and relevant materials. When the shelves contain shabby, worn-out items, the collection doesn't invite customers to peruse it.

Weeding helps the library to provide customers with an inviting space full of interesting, relevant and intriguing materials. For the librarian, weeding has additional advantages. It helps you to find gaps in your collection so that you can make new purchases with confidence, and it creates space for those materials. Weeding can also help identify missing items. Paradoxically, weeding is a good way to increase circulation, because it allows materials that have previously been overlooked to stand out and be checked out.

Why It Doesn't Get Done
If weeding provides so many benefits, why is it so hard to do? Below are some common reasons that weeding is avoided and responses that may help you decide to tackle a weeding project.

- ***"It takes too much time."***
  A careful weeding plan will actually save you time by making maintenance, search time and shelving operations more efficient. Plus, weeding doesn't have to be done in one huge block--in fact, it is most effective when done gradually and carefully.
- ***"I can't bear to throw away books."***
  A book is only as good as its contents. Outdated books should be discarded. Books that are no longer appropriate for your library may find a new lease on life in another setting.
- ***"I'm worried someone will get upset if I get rid of anything."***
  Develop a policy, get it approved by your board and stick to it. Be ready to explain to your community why weeding is necessary and how it is conducted. Avoid "crisis weeding" where many materials are removed at once.
- ***"I don't feel comfortable getting rid of public property."***
  When you develop your weeding policy, you should check on any local requirements for the disposal of public property. Keep in mind that weeding is not arbitrary or destructive. Your good judgment and deliberate pruning will make the library more useful. Some books are literally dead wood.
- ***"If I toss it today, I'll need it tomorrow."***
  This is possible, but not very likely. If it does happen, don't panic. Use your skills to find another source for the information: a more recent book, a current encyclopedia, a periodical article, the Web.
- ***"If I weed, I won't have enough books."***
  What is "enough"? Your goal is probably to have a quality collection. Focusing on the quantity of materials in your collection will not improve their quality; in fact, it can actually harm the collection as a whole by diluting the impact of your most useful materials.
- ***"I'm afraid I'll throw away something valuable."***
  Most old books are too worn or too common to be worth anything in the rare or second-hand book market. If by chance you should find a good quality, truly rare book while weeding, consider selling it and using the proceeds to buy books for

your circulating collection. An excellent source for evaluating the worth of an item is **Your Old Books**, a site maintained by experts in rare books.

- ***"Weeding means admitting to mistakes."***
  Turn this around for a more positive outlook. If something is worn out, then it has been well-used, and it was a good choice. If it's dated, it's a testimony to the passage of time. If it hasn't been used, then the valuable shelf space it is using can be reclaimed.

Planning Your Approach

The best known weeding method for public libraries is the CREW method: **C**ontinuous **R**eview, **E**valuation and **W**eeding. Another method, developed by Stanley Slote, is based on research indicating that the best predictor of future use is past use (circulation). Much of the information contained in this discussion of weeding is derived from the CREW Method. If you prefer a method that uses formulas, you may want to look at Slote's.

You should keep the following in mind when you are planning your approach to weeding:

Setting Goals and Priorities

Jobs that are regularly scheduled parts of routine are the most likely jobs to get done. Weeding needs to be a continuous process. Most libraries benefit from a complete weeding once a year, so try to get through the collection every year. Count the number of shelves you have, divide by the number of weeks in the year, and you have a weekly weeding goal.

If this seems too daunting, start by scheduling individual sections. When your shelver says, "I just can't get one more book on that shelf," weed that section. Weeding an entire subject area allows you to judge your subject coverage more accurately. And some subject areas, such as computer software, may need more attention than areas like philosophy.

Keeping Records

Keep a weeding record. You may want a simple log, in which you record the date of the work, the starting place in the collection and the ending place. If a log doesn't work, maybe an abstract diagram or list of library content that you can cross off or color in as you weed each section will work for you. Just be sure that your record keeps track of what has happened, when the work was done, and by whom. A concrete measure of your progress keeps your morale high.

Weed as You Go

Examine materials as they are returned to the circulation desk. Set aside damaged and obviously outdated materials so that they can be evaluated. Your shelvers can help by nominating obvious candidates. As you move through the collection, keep an eye out for weedable materials.

Using Computers to Weed

If your library is automated, the computer system can aid in the weeding process.

You should be able to get the latest checkout date for items in your target subject range, and the date each item was added to the collection (accession date). Have a list printed which includes author, title, barcode number, publication date, last circulation date and number of copies for each item in your target subject area. If you have the list printed in call number order, you can use the list to inform you about items quickly as you move along the shelves.

Defining Your Criteria

The following criteria should be considered for each item in your collection. You will probably make decisions based on some combination of these criteria - that is, an item should probably not be discarded based on meeting only one of these criteria.

C.R.E.W. Method Wedding Criteria:

MUSTIE

M **M**isleading and/or factually inaccurate:

This includes materials that are misleading because they are out-of-date. When evaluating currency, the key issue is relevance. History books may not be especially current, but if they are still relevant they should be kept. Science books that do not reflect the latest thinking can be misleading because they are essentially inaccurate in light of new knowledge. (Think of all those astronomy books that describe Pluto as a planet!) Generally, materials on computers, law, science, technology, health and travel, need to be current to be useful.

U **U**gly (worn out beyond mending or rebinding):

Tattered warriors who have served well should be retired. Problems to watch for include broken spines, fragile or brittle paper or bindings, bent corners, torn or missing pages, defaced pages or covers, insect or mildew infestations and item that look worn or dirty.

Evaluating an item's usefulness based on its age is a tricky issue, especially for books. Most old books hold very little value (monetary or otherwise) in a public library. Library customers generally prefer new books, regardless of content. If the item is so fragile that it can't withstand normal library use, then unless the item offers unique historical value, it should be discarded.

S **S**uperseded by a new edition or a better source;

Some items need be updated regularly with new editions. Items likely to be out of date quickly are travel guides, atlases, subjects that change frequently such as college entrance exams, guides to elected officials and anything related to fashion or fads.

Some items may have been the best you could find on a subject at one time, but have been surpassed by new items that do a much better job of presenting the material. For example, if your health guides don't discuss AIDS and other disease prevention issues, you will need to remove them and update your collection.

Another issue to consider is appropriate coverage. Since society is constantly changing, what was an accepted view of minorities or women years ago might be considered inappropriate today. Your goal should be to offer balanced coverage while preserving Intellectual Freedom.

Fiction can become outdated, too. *Bobby Goes to the Sock Hop* will probably not set afire the hearts of today's teenagers. On the other hand, some classics, such as *Little Women*, may never go out of style.

T **T**rivial (of no discernable literary or scientific merit);

A lot of popular fiction is very high demand while it is “hot,” but after it cools off, it turns out not to have been very good. For proof of this, look at Best-Seller lists from 10 or even just 5 years ago.

I **I**rrelevant to the needs and interests of your community;

This can be difficult because interests swell and wane. It is true that “everything old is new again” sometime, but library collections cannot afford to wait that long.

E **E**lsewhere (the material may be easily borrowed from another source).

Subjects of widespread interest to your community should be covered in your library. Esoteric interests of a few community members may be handled by turning to other libraries.

Additional weeding criteria include:

Local Historical Value
Does this item have local historical value? If so, perhaps it should be given to the local historical society. (If your library serves as the town's archives, you'll probably consider housing those materials separately from the regular circulating collection anyway.)

Multiple Copies
Sometimes you will discover that you have many more copies of an item than you realized. Perhaps some of them were donated copies, or you have several different editions of the same work, or it was a very popular subject or best-seller that has fallen into decline. Extra copies are often excellent candidates for book sales, trades or donations.

In addition to using MUSTIE and the weeding criteria stated above, we have compiled additional weeding considerations for each section of the *Dewey Decimal Classification* and other typical collection categories. The Sunlink Weed of the Month Archive also provides some valuable advice on weeding particular subjects. For extensive coverage by Dewey numbers, including formulas for evaluating use and condition, consult the *CREW Manual*.

000s - General: Replace at least one set of encyclopedias every five years. Circulate older sets for no more than eight years. Try to get an encyclopedia yearbook every year. Materials on computers are seldom useful after three years.

100s - Philosophy and Psychology: Popular psychology and self-help books can quickly become outdated. More scholarly works on psychology should be replaced after five to eight years.

200s - Religion and Mythology: There can be a high turnover in books by popular religious leaders. Does your collection reflect the interests of your community? Try to have something current on each of the major religions.

300s - Social Sciences: Replace almanacs in the reference collection after two years. Circulate older volumes no more than three to five years. Law, government and education materials are often used for school reports and debates, so they may have historical value. However, it is very important to remove outdated statute information. Be sure your collection is balanced and current, especially for controversial topics.

400s - Languages: Foreign language and English as a Second Language materials may wear out very quickly; you may need to replace books in this category frequently.

500s - Pure Sciences: Basic, historical works on science such as Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* should be retained. However, new science discoveries, theories and techniques can make an outdated collection look very strange and

will destroy your credibility with technophiles. Scientific materials are continuously being updated.

600s - Applied Sciences: Medical discoveries are constantly being announced and older materials may be very misleading or even dangerous. Popular culture thrives on fads. Try to keep up to date on what's "hot" and toss what's "not." Materials on collector's items should be kept, as should repair manuals for cars and appliances.

700s - Arts and Recreation: Histories of art and music should be kept until they wear out. Other areas should be evaluated for their currency.

800s - Literature: You probably have multiple copies of classic literary works. Keep the most recent edition that's in the best condition, as well as criticisms of classic writers. It's a good idea to check discards against reading lists from local schools.

900s - History, Travel and Geography: History books should be evaluated for demand, factual accuracy and interpretation. A balance of perspectives is ideal. For travel and geographical materials, don't keep anything older than two years unless it has a significant amount of background or history information that you can't get anywhere else. An outdated travel guide is probably less useful than current periodical information or materials from the Web.

B - Biography: It's easy to accumulate multiple copies of popular biographies and autobiographies. Generally, you won't need them all, especially those that are poorly written. Keep up with new releases on enduring personalities (especially political and historical figures) and keep biographies with literary value.

Adult Fiction: This is another area prone to multiple copies that are good for book sales. Works with enduring appeal should be kept. Probably the most difficult decisions in weeding fiction are whether to retain all of the works in a series. This may depend on the availability of older titles in other libraries and on the reading habits of community members.

Young Adult and Children's Fiction: Watch for outdated topics, oversimplified or abridged classics when the original is appropriate for age and reading level, and multiple copies of series books. Replace worn out classics. Young adult fiction should be less than ten years old. With so many varieties of picture books on the market, your collection should be chosen on the basis of good stories and illustrations. The CREW Manual advises against flimsy bindings.

Young Adult and Children's Non-fiction: Consider these materials using the same criteria as for adult non-fiction, but look for inaccuracy and oversimplification. "Something" is not better than nothing if what you have is outdated or inaccurate.

The Reference Collection: Weeding the reference collection requires some special considerations. How often reference books are used can be difficult to determine since most reference works do not circulate, but you may be able to tell how often a book is removed from the shelf. Most of the criteria for removal remain the same as for circulating collections, with the possible exceptions of use and currency. Some sources are considered reference "classics" and may be valuable for many years. Others (especially scientific, medical and technological works) may be quickly outdated. Many reference works are issued in revised editions, and previous editions can usually be removed. Dictionaries are an exception to this rule, particularly unabridged versions. Another exception is any new edition that supplements rather than replaces an older edition, such as quotation books.

Audiovisual Materials: Non-print media should be weeded on a regular schedule just like print materials, although it can be harder to judge content and quality without spending a great deal of time watching or listening to each item. Keep in mind that non-print materials can be difficult to borrow through interlibrary loan. Other issues to consider when evaluating non-print materials include format and condition. Is the format still available? If not and the material is not replaceable, you may want to investigate transferring unique materials to current formats. Watch for broken cases, missing pieces, poor sound or visual quality and scratched or damaged CDs.

Nebraska Materials: This is one area where you will probably want to weed lightly, with an eye for new editions or updated information. Keep as much as you can, depending on the scope and size of your library and the presence or lack of a local historical society. Local history, materials by local authors or with local settings, memoirs, directories and oral histories should not be weeded.

Magazines and Newspapers: Keep local papers at least a year. Newsprint deteriorates, so files that are meant to be kept as historic records need to be transferred to another medium. Microfilm has been used successfully in many libraries for a long time. Digitized file have the added benefits of being searchable. Some magazines that are frequently referred to, such as *Consumer Reports,* should be kept for five years. Check to see what kind of full text is available through the online indexes; many magazines will not have to be retained for more than a year.

Now What?

Once you have completed weeding a section, you will have to decide what to do with the items you have identified as problematic. Most small libraries are not able to build new facilities or store items indefinitely; often there will not be funds available to replace an item immediately. You will have to decide whether an item should be discarded, replaced, or kept.

Discard

If you decide to discard an item, you have to decide how to dispose of it. Your

weeding policy must address the disposal issue clearly and confidently. There are really only three options: destroy it, give it to someone else, or sell it.

- **Sell It*:*** This is the best option for useable items. The public usually appreciates the opportunity to buy a "favorite" volume. It does take time to organize a sale (annual or ongoing) and space to store items, so this might be a great project for your Friends group or a dedicated volunteer. Clearly mark all discards. However, beware! Many volumes bought at a library sale by overeager bibliophiles will find their way back to the library as donations after several years.

- **Give It Away:** This option has the advantage of allowing the community to "recycle" materials. Use common sense and tact when choosing this method. You might even work out some reciprocal agreements with neighboring libraries so that each library buys different titles in different years and then “shares” relatively new, lightly used items.

- **Destroy It*:*** Materials that you have weeded because they were misleading, or in bad condition shouldn’t be allowed to become someone else’s problem. Investigate discrete ways of discarding materials, and recycle what you can. Be prepared to justify weeding decisions.

Keep
Some “keep” decisions are easy to make. Others are not. If you decide to keep something but you think it should probably be weeded during your next inspection, indicate on the title page why you kept it. Perhaps you know there will be an updated edition soon, or you anticipate that interest in a topic will soon die down. Try to resist the temptation to keep everything!

Keep, but Mend First
Mend an item only when the needed repair is minor (The *CREW manual* suggests that you should spend no longer than 15 minutes per item.) or if the item would be very difficult or expensive to replace or has some unique value to the collection. Some questions to ask yourself before you mend or rebind include: Would it be more cost-effective to buy a new copy? Do I really need to keep this item? How much time and money will it cost to repair it? Is it practical to send it away for repair? Do I have the resources and skills to repair it in-house? Resources include money, time (yours, a staff member’s or a volunteer's) and materials. Consult the **Preservation** section in this notebook for more information.

Replace with New Copy
Before going to the expense and hassle of trying to locate a replacement for an item that may very well be out of print or not truly useful in your library, think long

and hard. Is it worth it? You might want to replace an item with a newer, more comprehensive, or better written item on the same subject.

Updating the Catalog
Don't forget this essential step! It would be very frustrating for a customer to find the "perfect" item in the catalog and then discover it had been weeded months before.

Resources for Librarians
The CREW Method: Expanded Guidelines for Collection Evaluation and Weeding for Small and Medium-Sized Public Librarie*s.* (Revised and updated.), by Belinda Boon. Austin, TX: Texas State Library.

The How-To-Do-It Manual for Small Libraries*,* edited by Bill Katz.. Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc. New York. 1988

Chapter 7

Intellectual Freedom

Areas covered:

• Who is a Censor?
• Intellectual Freedom Considerations for Selection
• Handling Challenges to Materials in Your Collection
• Internet Use Policies
• Resources for Librarians

The concept of intellectual freedom involves protecting the rights of all individuals to pursue the types of information and to read anything that interests them. Attempts by a member of the community to remove materials from a library collection or to restrict access to them may be the most common challenges to intellectual freedom that a small library will face.

The origins of intellectual freedom can be traced back to Socrates, who believed in the value and benefits of free discussion. The American Library Association (ALA) has been interested in intellectual freedom for a long time, with the first Library Bill of Rights written in 1939. The **Library Bill of Rights** has been modified several times over the years with the most recent version available from the ALA web site. While the Library Bill of Rights does not provide legal protection (legal protection comes from the First Amendment), it does provide a set of principles to guide libraries and librarians in dealing with issues of censorship and intellectual freedom.)

Intellectual freedom advocates oppose censorship, which places "… restrictive controls on the dissemination of ideas, information, or images transmitted though any communication medium." (American Library Association's *World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services*) Censorship of ideas and information has been practiced in various forms throughout history, starting with the earliest civilizations. As Gutenberg's first movable-type printing press enabled the spread of the "radical" ideas of the Reformation, censorship also flourished. Today, censorship is practiced in many ways, both obvious and subtle.

This section discusses some common sources of censorship, intellectual freedom considerations for selection, ways to handle challenges to materials in your library, and the role of Internet Use Policies in libraries.

Who is a Censor?

There is no single source of censorship, with forms of censorship found at various levels in society. The government, local communities, and individual librarians can all be considered to practice censorship in various ways.

Government censorship influences our legal definitions and interpretations of the issue. For many years the 1873 Comstock Act regulated materials considered obscene that were sent through the mail in the United States. The 1957 Roth decision by the Supreme Court changed the idea of what could be considered obscene. A three-part test for obscenity was established. First, was a "prurient interest in sex" the theme of the work? Second, was the work a threat to the standards of the community? Third, was the work without any social value? The 1973 Miller decision by the Supreme Court modified the three-part test of the Roth decision. The first part of the new test asked whether an average person applying community standards would find that the work applied to "prurient" interests in sex. The second asked whether the work described sexual activity, against state law, in an offensive matter. The third asked whether the work lacked any literary, artistic, political or scientific value. This shifted the responsibility for defining obscenity from the national level to the community level.

Censorship can also occur at the local level. Threats to community standards are often cited in issues of censorship. Identifying those standards may be difficult for the librarian, especially in a community with a diverse population that has a range of needs and interests. Local religious groups, "concerned citizens" or a school board may object to certain materials and attempt to censor them. There are many Internet sites that identify the most commonly banned books due to community disapproval. See for example:

- **The Most Frequently Banned Books in the 1990s** lists fifty books that were the most frequently challenged in school and public libraries between 1990 and 1992.
- **Banned Books On-Line** has information on banned books and censorship attempts.
- **Intellectual Challenged and Banned Books** is an ALA site listing the top ten most banned books and the top ten most challenged authors for the previous year.

Some forms of censorship are not often discussed outside the library world: self-censorship and selection as censorship. Self-censorship occurs when a librarian deliberately avoids selecting materials that might cause controversy in the community, or materials with which they personally disagree. A collection development policy that specifically aims for a balance of views can help the librarian make selection decisions without self-censoring. In some cases of self-censorship, the librarian does not make information available to the community based on his or her own judgment of the materials. At some level, however, the librarian must always judge materials in order to choose the highest quality and most reliable sources. Based on this decision process, some people argue that librarians routinely perform a type of censorship by selecting one information resource over another for inclusion in the collection. Ultimately, each librarian is responsible for following the collection development policies at his or her library and for monitoring his or her own actions to avoid placing intellectual freedom at risk.

Freedom Considerations for Selection
Given the possibilities of censorship by the government, the community, and the librarian, it is critical to establish guidelines for protecting intellectual freedom (such as the Library Bill of Rights) and to consider potentially controversial collection development issues. Here are some issues to consider:

Labeling: Should materials be labeled for content? Libraries routinely use "finding aids" to help patrons when they browse the shelves. A common example is labeling books by genre, such as westerns or mysteries. Carrying this one step further, should materials containing profanity or sexual content be labeled? Labeling can be a slippery slope: soon the whole collection may be labeled, and censors may find it very easy to condemn entire sections based on those labels, rather than considering content. Labels are a subjective judgment, and it is not the responsibility of the librarian to serve as a rating system. A related concept is restricted access. Sometimes access to materials is restricted because they are fragile or likely to be vandalized or stolen; in other situations access is restricted due to the content of the work. Should materials be separated from the main collection if they are controversial or considered obscene? According to the principle of intellectual freedom, neither the library nor the librarian should be responsible for determining who may have access to materials held by the library.

Obscenity: What constitutes pornography? Many art books contain nude figures; how do those books compare to magazines such as *Playboy*? Defining pornography and debating the value of restricted access, especially for children, are common issues in libraries.

Racism: This is another complicated debate, since people may have different definitions of what is racist. Should blatantly racist materials be considered for selection? Some racist materials have great historical value for research. Changes in societal values can affect the perceived value of materials that were written in different times. As an example, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain has recently been labeled racist by some people who feel that it negatively portrays black people; when it was originally published, however, it was considered controversial because a black slave was the book's hero. Other racist materials, such as the recent book *The Bell Curve* by Richard J. Herstein and Charles A. Murray, propose "scientific" theories to explain race relations.

Balance: The collection should provide materials representing both sides of controversial issues. Examples of balance are discussed under "Gender/Sex," "Questionable Truth," and "Popular Materials."

Gender/Sex: Should material that presents stereotypical sex roles be considered, such as women as good housewives or homosexuals as deviants? What about materials discussing sexual aberration or manuals such as *The Joy of Sex*? Whether we approve of it or not, not everyone conforms to what is considered "normal," and censoring materials that portray "alternative" lifestyles is a challenge to intellectual freedom. Recently the children's book *Daddy's Roommate* came under fire for portraying homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle. Groups who wanted the book censored found

an alternative title, *Alphie's House*, which called homosexuality a curable disease. The concept of intellectual freedom says that both books have the right to be in a library, regardless of personal opinions on the issue of homosexuality. This relates to the earlier issue of balance. Protecting intellectual freedom does not mean that a book cannot be rejected for other selection criteria reasons, such as the quality of the material.

Illegal Acts: Should material on making drugs, making bombs, or instigating an armed rebellion be considered for selection? What someone might do with information should not be the librarian's main criteria for selection decisions. An example is the debate over whether the game Dungeons and Dragons promotes Satanism. Another controversy centers on books that present methods of committing suicide.

Questionable Truth: This topic includes outdated science, medical plans such as diets that are unproven, and Holocaust denial literature. People who lived through the Holocaust, or have relatives who did, may object to books such as *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* by A. R. Butz. As controversial as it may be to include such a source in the collection, it is important to provide a range of perspectives. Another example is material about the theories of evolution and creationism. Despite how the librarian may feel about the issue, material again needs to present balance.

Popular material: Popular fiction (for example, best sellers, horror novels or other works with violence, and romance novels) may really boost circulation figures, but does this type of material have any literary merit? The importance of this question depends on your goals for the collection. A work with little literary merit should not be excluded if it helps serve the mission of the library. The community's desires have to be considered, and definitions of what is literary are subjective. See the notebook's section on **Basis for Selection** discussion for more on this topic.

Items likely to be stolen: A source with nudity or beautiful illustrations may be subject to mutilation or theft, and may be of interest to the community for only a short while. Examples include *Playboy* or Madonna's book, *Sex*. Should librarians exclude materials that are common targets for theft from consideration for selection? While your decision should be based on your collection development policy, a librarian may find it difficult to justify purchasing an item that may only be a passing fancy.

Handling Challenges to Materials in Your Collection

In the unfortunate circumstance that your library is confronted with a challenge to an item in the collection, there are many things that you can do. *The Intellectual Freedom Manual for Arizona Libraries* outlines procedures that you should follow which are summarized here. However, one of the most important things to remember is to be prepared. Do not wait until you are faced with a challenge to devise a strategy! Plan ahead, have guidelines in place, and make sure everyone who works in the library understands these procedures.

1. Keep your policies and procedures current.

This is especially important considering the popularity of the Internet. Keep up with developments in ALA, especially any changes to the **Library Bill of Rights**, or the

Freedom to Read Statement regarding labeling and electronic access.

2. Have a formal policy to handle complaints.
Complaints should be written down and then submitted to a review process. It is a good idea to develop a standardized form that requires the patron to answer questions about the material and why they object to it. Here are some examples of questions to ask on a complaint form:

- What do you object to and what are the specific page numbers of the offensive content?
- For what age group do you think this material is appropriate?
- Did you read the whole work? If not, which parts did you read?
- What do you consider the effects of reading this material?
- What about it is good?
- What is the theme?
- What do literary critics think about the work?
- What action should the library take? Should the library withdraw the work from the collection or restrict access to the work?
- What source would you recommend to replace this item?

3. Have open lines of communication with local community leaders.
If the community leaders are familiar with your library's collection goals and collection development policy, they will be more understanding when materials in your collection are challenged. You should make sure your local leaders understand that the Library Bill of Rights stems from the First Amendment.

4. Communicate the library's position on intellectual freedom to the public.
By explaining what intellectual freedom means (that it is a broad set of principles intended to guard against censorship), you may gain more community support. It might be a good idea to post the library's own version of the Library Bill of Rights in the library or make it available in a pamphlet.

Internet Use Policies
With the explosion of interest in the Internet over the last few years and the availability of Internet access in libraries, there is growing concern over who should have access to the information found on the Internet. Information available over the Internet is unregulated, varies widely in quality, and contains many sites that are sexually explicit or are otherwise unsuitable (especially for children). Given this, should there be restrictions placed on Internet access?

The American Library Association (ALA) believes that individuals have the right to make their own decisions about what information is appropriate for them and that access to information, including electronic information, should not be restricted. **ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom** provides extensive information about intellectual freedom issues and ALA policies.

Others argue that libraries, as public institutions, should restrict access to the Internet

by only providing links to "quality" or "approved" sites. Congress has actively tried to regulate the Internet through the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which included the Communications Decency Act of 1996; this legislation was struck down as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Congress then passed the Child Online Protection Act (otherwise known as COPA). This act replaced the Communications Decency Act. According to the American Library Association, COPA prohibits the transmission of any material over the Internet that is deemed to be “harmful to minors” if the communication was made for a commercial purpose. Since this act deals with commercial transactions it doesn’t directly affect libraries. In 2000, the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was passed by Congress. The United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the law in 2003. Public libraries and schools that receive either LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) monies and/or E-rate discounts for Internet-related services and/or equipment are required to use (technology protection measuring devices) a.k.a. filtering software on their computers. CIPA was enacted by Congress to meet the concern of prohibiting certain images from being displayed on the Internet. For more details about CIPA and libraries visit the American Library Association website. Filtering software blocks sexually explicit and other offensive material by applying a ratings system or searching web sites for specific keywords that are deemed inappropriate. The problem with filtering software is that not every site is rated, some sites may be mislabeled, some sites are blocked that contain valuable information, and other sites are not blocked that ought to be.

Given these concerns, it would be wise to develop an Internet Use Policy to state your library's position on who has access to the Internet and what kinds of materials can be accessed. Many libraries, especially school libraries, have adopted what are known as Acceptable Use Policies (AUP). The AUP is usually a written agreement that outlines permissible uses of the Internet, rules for online behavior, and access privileges. AUPs often include an explanation of the Internet and how it will be accessed, an outline of the patron's responsibilities while using the Internet in the library, and a statement that lets the patron know that using the Internet is a privilege and not a right.

Resources for Librarians

ALA Intellectual Freedom Manual
http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/iftoolkits/ifmanual/intellectual.htm

ALA Library Bill of Rights:
http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm

ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom
http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=oif

Banned in the U.S.A.: a reference guide to book censorship in schools and public libraries, Rev. and expanded 2nd ed., by Herbert N Foerstel. Information Age Publishing: 2006.

Chapter 8

Collection Assessment

Areas covered in Chapter 8:

- **Benefits of Conducting an Assessment**
- **How Collections are Measured**
- **Assessment Techniques**
- **Assessment Framework: Brief Tests**
- **Resources for Librarians**

Collection assessment is "an organized process for systematically analyzing and describing a library's collection." Assessments are conducted to provide several kinds of important information to libraries. They help clarify the library's goals in the context of its mission and budget, supply data used to set funding priorities, and build a base for long-range planning and administration.

There are many ways to conduct assessments, some of which may be better suited to small libraries. However, the success of any method depends on how well it meets the goals of the evaluation, which in turn depends on the purpose and mission of the library. The process can be broken into two steps: assessment, in which the collection is described according to the different subjects and formats of the materials, and evaluation, in which the collection's appropriateness for the community is judged. (WLN, p. 1, 13) This training section discusses several methods and techniques for assessment. It draws from the *WLN Collection Assessment Manual*, which is well suited to smaller libraries.

Benefits of Conducting an Assessment

Collection assessment provides library administrators with a management tool for adapting the collection, an internal analysis tool for planning, a tool to respond systematically to budget changes, and a communication tool and data for resource sharing with other libraries. Library staff can also benefit by having a better understanding of the collection, a basis for more selective collection development, improved communication with similar libraries, and enhanced professional skills in collection development. For libraries involved in cooperative resource sharing, collection assessment is essential in determining how each library fits into the system and what should be expected for each library's further growth in the context of the cooperative relationship. (WLN, p. 14.)

The Importance of Planning

When planning a collection assessment project, it is important to carefully define the goals for the program, choose the most appropriate method(s) to be used, and establish what information is needed. An assessment can be fully comprehensive or it can focus

on specific areas, depending on the library's needs (and the resources available to carry it out - evaluations can be expensive!). It can be very tempting to gather all sorts of information because it seems interesting, but it may be useless if it does not fit into the parameters of the project. Be sure that everyone participating in the project understands what is expected and when tasks should be completed. (WLN, p. 15; Brancolini, p. 64.)

How Collections are Measured
Evaluation and assessment techniques fall into two broad categories: collection-centered (counting holdings and checking lists to determine the collection's scope and depth) and client-centered (conducting user surveys and gathering information on how clients use the collection). An effective assessment uses both types of techniques to gather two kinds of data: quantitative (including numbers, age, and/or use statistics) and qualitative (such as observations). The type of data useful for your particular evaluation depends on the library's purpose and mission. For example, a library that wants to provide many varied titles might compare its acquisition rate to annual publishing output, and might look at titles held per capita. If the library has very limited space and must keep growth to a minimum, data on turnover rates (how often items are circulated), acquisitions, and withdrawals (weeding) will be essential. A library that focuses on popular works would want information on circulation and in-house use per capita. (Krueger, p. 22)

Some examples of the types of quantitative and qualitative data you can collect include:

Examples of Quantitative Data:

- ***Number of titles:*** A manual or automated shelflist count, a physical count or estimate of titles from the shelves, a count of acquisitions and expenditures, the percent of each subject's yearly growth, the percent of acquisitions compared to published titles, and the percent of acquisitions compared to published titles.
- ***Age and timeliness of materials:*** The materials' median age, the range and distribution of publication dates, and most common publication dates.
- ***Use:*** Circulation statistics by type or subject and interlibrary loan borrowing statistics.
- ***Per capita measures:*** How many titles or items per community member.

Examples of Qualitative Data:

- ***Percent of standard titles or items:*** Calculated by consulting "best" lists.
- ***Individual or group evaluation:*** Shelf scanning by the librarian, observation by an outside expert, or observation by a committee. (WLN, p. 19)

Assessment Techniques There are five standard techniques for obtaining assessment information. They collect both quantitative and qualitative data, though they are not completely objective. By using a combination of techniques to complement and verify each other, the good judgment and experience of the librarian will compensate for much of the subjectivity. Regardless of the techniques you choose to use, it is very important to obtain data on the number of items by type and age. These two types of data are

essential to the assessment process. The five techniques are discussed below (WLN, pp. 20-26.).

Examination of shelf list data
This technique gathers quantitative data about the collection, including number of titles, percent of the total collection, median age and mode. An automated system can often provide detailed reports of this information. If you don't have an automated system, you may have to manually review the shelflist or the collection itself. It is important to determine how you will handle volumes as well as titles. What will you do in the case of multiple copies of the same title? Assess the age of the reference collection separately from the rest of the collection. The median age indicates the point at which half the collection is older than the date indicated, revealing currency and/or retrospective strength. The mode shows what dates are most common, revealing clumps in the collection. Although this method is relatively easy to do, it has some limitations. It can only count cataloged materials and does not measure quality.

Direct examination of the collection
This technique is well suited to smaller libraries and areas of a collection that don't fit into the classification scheme (such as a Nebraska History or local area collection). It has the advantage of providing relevant information quickly, but it can be highly subjective (especially if the person doing the assessment also does selection). Working in a team should be encouraged. Direct examination should not be used as the sole assessment technique. Shelf-scanning should be conducted after the shelf list data have been collected; the two techniques complement each other to provide a reliable characterization of the collection. Be sure to examine the entire collection, including periodicals, audiovisuals, and reference works. You should make notes on items that should be weeded, but do not weed as you assess. Depending on the size and type of your collection, you may not need to examine every item; sometimes a sample works just as well.

List checking
This method compares the collection to authoritative lists of what is available and appropriate for a particular type of collection. There are hundreds of possible lists to use; some of the most common include ***H.W. Wilson's Public Library Catalog***, ***Fiction Catalog*** and ***Children's Catalog***. For reference books, ***Guide to Reference Books*** and ***Walford's Guide to Reference Materials*** are good choices. It is important to carefully interpret the qualitative data that result from checking lists, considering who assembled the list and for what purpose. List checking can help the library staff understand the size and scope of possible materials, and it can be helpful in assessing what should be added to the collection. Because there are many possible lists to check and they are quickly outdated, this can be a time- and labor-intensive method, especially if you do not have an automated system. Misleading results can occur when the same "best book" lists are used for selection as well as evaluation, when published lists are written for a very different audience than the library's community, and when lists don't include works owned by the library that are as good or better for the local community than the materials on the list. (Gabriel, p. 81)

Evaluation by an outside expert
A knowledgeable person from outside the library staff can be enlisted to survey a portion of the collection and provide qualitative data. Outside experts include consultants, other librarians, or a library user with specialized knowledge. This method has the advantage of bringing a fresh perspective to the collection and increasing goodwill on the part of the community. An obvious disadvantage is the subjectivity of the evaluator. If that person is biased, has a very narrow view or doesn't understand the collection policy, the results of the survey may be suspect. It can also be difficult to find an outside expert, or he/she may not be available when needed. If you choose to use an outside expert, be sure that the expert understands your assessment goals and that you are asking for advice which may or may not be implemented. That person's contributions should always be recognized. Some authors do not recommend expert evaluation or list checking for public libraries since collection decisions must be made with the needs and purpose of the local library in mind (Krueger, p. 16)

Citation analysis
This technique is most applicable to research or special collections. It can be characterized as a specialized form of list checking, in which the lists are created by the assessor from scholarly books and articles. Citation lists can be more specific and current than published lists, but citation analysis is time-consuming (less so with a computer) and labor intensive. If your collection is broad, this will probably not be a useful method.

Assessment Framework: Brief Tests
For many smaller libraries, the Conspectus may seem too complex or intimidating to be useful. With the Conspectus, it uses a series of worksheets to record and organize data about some or all of the levels, including concise comments. The data is then analyzed and numeric codes are assigned which represent a rating of several aspects of the library's collection. A complementary methodology to the Conspectus is the brief test, a collection-centered measure that focuses on the possession of titles to indicate strength or depth, rather than usefulness. Brief tests are intended to address two problems with the Conspectus: lack of evaluation consistency between libraries and the lack of resources that may make a Conspectus difficult to use. (White, p. 7) These tests are not intended to measure a collection's currency or to aid in selection; they are designed to assess past collection development decisions.

Brief tests are similar to the list-checking technique described below, but the list is ranked by how many member libraries of OCLC hold particular titles. By comparing a particular library's holdings to the ranked list, the assessor can determine if that library has a strong collection (meaning it has items that would probably only be used at high levels of scholarship).

If the library holds highly specialized materials, it probably also holds very common materials in the same field, but the reverse is not true. Some materials can be found in almost any library - so their presence does not provide much useful information about the strength or depth of that collection. A library that is ranked Level 1 in the Conspectus framework probably has many titles in common with other Level 1 libraries.

The results of the test should not be used to calculate percentages of literature held (as in the standard list checking technique), since the title list is not a true sample of possible literature. This is a much-simplified explanation of the brief list technique. For more information, consult the full work as listed in "For Further Reading." (White, pp. 33-34.)

Resources for Librarians

WorldCat: Collection Analysis
http://www.oclc.org/collectionanalysis/default.htm

Chapter 9

Preservation and Book/Material Repair

Areas covered

- **Common Preservation Problems**
- **Preservation Solutions**
- **Book Repair**
- **Resources for Librarians**

Preservation and conservation refer to the processes of monitoring the physical condition of the library's materials and taking action to prevent further deterioration. Preservation issues can be defined as those that relate to the longevity of materials, while conservation issues include handling and storage (although the terms "preservation" and "conservation" are sometimes used interchangeably or defined differently). Ironically, books published since the beginning of the 20th century are more likely to decay than older books (due to the paper and methods of binding used). (Johnson, p.101) Other modern materials such as microfilm, photographs, videotapes and films have unique preservation needs.

The best time to begin addressing preservation issues is when ordering materials. When possible, it is a good idea to buy the best quality materials available (see this section's discussions on brittle paper and handling for some convincing evidence). Under a tight budget, some compromises have to be made, but if you anticipate high use or lots of potential damage it may be better to spend a little more on the purchase, since repair and/or replacement costs may be avoided. Preventing preservation and conservation problems is more cost-effective than trying to treat the problems later.

This section discusses some of the most common preservation and conservation problems faced in a small library (such as climate control, insect, mold and mildew infestations, and brittle paper) and common techniques used to handle these problems (such as book handling, repair and non-print preservation). Procedures for book repair are not discussed since they are beyond the scope of this training guide, but sources of further information are provided.

Common Preservation Problems Libraries of all types face several kinds of preservation problems. Some of the most common ones for small libraries relate to climate control, biological pests, and brittle books.

Environmental Control
The three most important factors in environmental control are humidity, temperature and

light. Unless you have the opportunity to design a new building or make substantial changes to an existing building, some of these factors will be beyond your control, but it is still a good idea to work toward the best possible conditions.

Temperature and Humidity*:*
According to Library of Congress preservation recommendations, an ideal environment for books is 55° F in storage areas and not more than 75° F in reading areas (below 70° F is better), with relative humidity levels at 50 percent. Very low humidity can cause paper to deteriorate, while high humidity encourages the growth of molds and mildew. Books deteriorate more rapidly at higher temperatures and with drastic changes of temperature and humidity, such as when air conditioning is turned off at night and on weekends. While utility costs may make it impossible to keep the library cool 24 hours a day (especially in the Arizona summer!), some effort should be made to avoid "roller coaster" cycles of temperature and humidity. (Evans, p. 462-263)

Light*:*
Both natural light and artificial light (especially incandescent lights) contribute to heat buildup in the building. Yellowed paper and faded inks are due in part to light exposure, particularly ultraviolet radiation, the most damaging form of light. UV rays are present in sunlight, fluorescent and tungsten lights, so whenever possible lights and windows should be fitted with ultraviolet filters or drapes. It can be quite difficult to protect the collection from the effects of sunlight in buildings with many windows. Non-print materials are particularly sensitive to the effects of ultraviolet light, so videotapes and microforms should never be shelved near a window! (Evans, p.464)

Biological Pests
In addition to controlling the environment, it is important to minimize (or eliminate) biological pests from your library. Some common pests include insects, molds, and mildew.

Insects:
Book worms (larder beetle larvae) are not the only organisms to find libraries appealing. Other common pests and their favorite meals include silverfish (wood pulp paper, flour paste and glue), cockroaches (anything, but especially book glue), termites (wood, with wood pulp paper as a second choice) and book lice (starch and gelatin sizing on paper), among others. With so many delicacies stored on your shelves, how can you avoid being overrun? When possible, keep insects out of the collection in the first place. Discouraging food and drink in the library is a good start. Carefully examine any gift items for insects (and mold and mildew, for that matter) before placing them in the collection. Another strategy is to keep the temperature and humidity as low as possible. Shifting the books on the shelves may deter some infestations. Be sure to clean along baseboards, in cracks and anywhere else dirt and insects could hide. If you start to see significant numbers of insects, don't hesitate to call in professionals who can get rid of your unwanted guests safely and effectively. (Evans, p. 465)

Molds and Mildew:
Molds and mildew are another form of biological hazard in libraries. Arizona libraries

probably don't contend with mold and mildew very often, considering how dry our climate usually is! However, if conditions are right - warm temperatures, relative humidity of 70 percent or higher, darkness and poor air circulation - the mold and mildew spores that are always present in the air will begin to grow. Certain kinds of organisms may prefer paper, leather or photographs. A clean, well-ventilated and climate-controlled environment goes a long way toward preventing infestation by any of these pests. (Harvey, p. 45)

Brittle Paper

Acidic wood pulp paper, which typically has short fibers that make the paper weak and acidic residues from the manufacturing process that cause it to deteriorate rapidly, is to blame for brittle pages. (A page is considered brittle if a corner breaks off when it is folded back and forth one or two times.) Newsprint is highly acidic and deteriorates quickly, while most books take a little longer to decay. Many large academic and public libraries are facing serious problems because so many of their books are brittle; small libraries, too, must deal with books that will essentially self-destruct. Whenever possible, it is well worth buying materials on non-acidic paper! Several options for dealing with brittle materials may be worth considering.

You may decide to ignore the material until it becomes unusable (if the item is not valuable or is easily replaced) or to discard the item and not replace it (if it is unlikely to be used).

- You could investigate buying a reprint edition on alkaline (non-acidic) paper (the least expensive option for materials likely to be used often).
- If the original item is not as valuable as the information it contains you might consider converting it to microform or electronic format, or make a photocopy on alkaline paper. Commercial firms can make a bound photocopy of materials. Keep in mind that these options may result in some damage to the original during the duplication process.

Some irreplaceable materials might be enclosed in alkaline containers available from binderies to slow down deterioration, but these containers do not stop the deterioration process. If an item must be kept and you need to prevent further deterioration, you will probably need to have the book deacidified by a professional, an expensive process. (Evans, p. 471-475)

Preservation Solutions

There are many ways that libraries can minimize damage caused by preservation problems. Some possible methods for handling these include binding materials, handling materials carefully, and repairing materials.

Binding and Rebinding

Your collection will determine how often you encounter the issues of binding and rebinding. If you regularly discard older journals, you may not need to bind anything in your collection. Rebinding is probably an issue if you have many books with damaged covers (especially paperbacks) that you cannot replace, either because new copies are

not available or because it is cheaper to rebind. A reliable commercial binder may also offer repair services, which is a plus if you are not able or willing to attempt repairs yourself.

Handling
Some basic guidelines for handling books can help reduce the number of damaged books you encounter. These suggestions should be familiar to both the library staff and customers. Avoid pulling on a book's cover or shoving books across dusty surfaces. Do not pack books so tightly on shelves that their bindings become warped or their covers become torn by people trying to pull them off the shelf. On the other hand, books should sit upright on shelves, not leaning or bent to one side.

Non-print materials also require special care. Microforms should be handled by the edges, since fingerprints can obscure the images, and microfilm and microfiche readers should be cleaned regularly to prevent scratching. Care should be taken to handle compact discs and CD-ROMs by the edges and magnetic media (such as computer discs) should not be placed near strong magnetic fields. (Harvey, p. 99)

Book Repair

When you are trying to decide whether to repair a damaged book, consider the resources needed to repair it (time, money, supplies and expertise) versus the item's value to the collection. If you decide to treat the book, you must choose from a spectrum of options that ranges from simple, expedient repair in the library to full conservation treatment by an expert. If the item is valuable or irreplaceable, be very wary of applying any technique that could further harm the book; on the other hand, if the item is easily replaced or likely to drop off in use, it may be less important to use "conservationally sound" techniques. You may have to aim for a balance between what is best for the book and what is possible given your resources. (Lavender, p. vii-viii)

The best way to learn about book repair is to take a class or workshop so that you can practice the necessary skills with the aid of an expert. If that is not possible, there are many good, detailed books and Web sites available. For a basic training guide, try **A Simple Book Repair Manual** from Dartmouth College. If you want to try creating a new photocopied book, some advice can be found at **Bookbinding, A Tutorial.** The following Web sites for library supply companies stock book repair supplies: **Gaylord**, **Kapco Library Products,** and **Vernon Library Supplies** (there is also a book repair video at this site).

Resources for Librarians
Book Repair: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians*,* by Kenneth Lavender and Scott Stockton. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc.

Bookbinding, A Tutorial
http://www.cs.uiowa.edu/~jones/book/

Preservation Materials Suppliers
Brodart
http://www.brodart.com/

Demco
http://www.demco.com/

Gaylord
http://www.gaylord.com/

Kapco Book Protection
https://www.kapco.com

Library Store
http://www.thelibrarystore.

What should I do with my materials before they hit the world of circulation?

Open the new book and examine it for any odds and ends that don't belong. Are the pages numbered correctly? Are there any "stuck" pages? Do you have a special upside down edition? *Return any defective materials for replacement or refund.*

To extend the life of a Paperback

Tape the spine and the front and back edges of the paperback. Tape the inside of the hinge area of the front and the back of the book. Use Clear protection tapes for the inside and outside. *On the outside, use Book-Lock or 3M 845. On the inside, use J-Lar.*

Use laminating material on paperbacks with higher circulation use. *Place the delayed-bond self-adhesive on the paperback with a bone folder.*

To extend the life of a Hardcover

Place book jacket covers over dust jackets of hardcovers. *Use book jackets from companies like Brodart, Demco, Gaylord etc. Use*

filament tape for attaching book jackets to the book. This tape can be found at Library Store, Gaylord, Brodart or Demco.

Chapter 10

Gifts and Donations

Areas covered:

- **The Importance of a Gift Policy**
- **Local and/or Historic Materials**
- **Problematic Materials**
- **Selling Donations**
- **Gifts to Encourage**
- **Other Ways to Involve the Public**
- **For Further Reading**

Donations of books and other materials are a sign of interest in the library, as well as a practical means of support. Accepting donations can be a tricky business, depending on who is making the gift, the needs of the library and the donor's wishes for the gift. It is important to address donations in your collection development policy so that all gifts can be handled appropriately and diplomatically. This section discusses some of the issues surrounding donations, as well as some other ways to involve the community in collection development.

The Importance of a Gift Policy

As with other areas of collection development, a written policy is a necessity. By stating your conditions for accepting gifts and clearly outlining the possible uses for donations, chances are good that everyone involved in the donation will be satisfied with the outcome. A gift policy should state that you will apply the same objective selection criteria to donations that you would apply to purchases of new books. It should also state what books you will not accept, such as reference books over five years old or textbooks. The librarian should reserve, in writing, the right to accept, reject, sell or otherwise dispose of donated materials. It may be helpful to have donators sign a form indicating that donations are made without restriction and that they understand that the library may use the donated items as the librarian deems appropriate. See **Chapter 2: Collection Development Policies** for more information.

Local and/or Historic Materials

Items that deserve special attention include books by local authors, local photographs of historical interest (if the subjects or places are not identified, perhaps some long-time residents might be able to lend a hand), yearbooks from local schools, local newspapers of historical importance, and local memorabilia.

Keep in mind that old photographs may need special (possibly expensive) treatment to prevent them from deteriorating; color photocopies on acid-free paper may be a good option. Likewise, old newspapers and scrapbooks of newspaper clippings should probably be photocopied, laminated (in multiple pieces, if necessary) and/or microfilmed before they become useless. See Chapter 9: Preservation for more information.

Problematic Materials
Storage limits would probably prevent you from accepting everything offered to the library, but you should also consider how useful the material would be in your collection and what condition it is in. Be sure to check donations carefully for damage, wear and mold, mildew or insect infestation. To be useful to a library, donated books need to be in good condition, be attractive to readers, and meet selection criteria including currency and "fit" in the collection. If you receive books that are in good condition but aren't suitable for your collection, you might try to sell or exchange them at a second-hand book dealer.

Donations of someone's collection of "old books" and magazines require careful screening. A really valuable "old book" collection is rare, since monetary value depends on condition and interest to collectors. Old periodicals will probably receive very little use but take up a lot of space.

Unless you have a great deal of room, plus time and money for processing, both kinds of gifts should probably be avoided. Some authors argue that you should never turn down any donation. Whether you decide to accept all gifts or screen them before they are accepted will be determined by how many donations you handle and how much time, space and effort is available for processing them.

Selling Donations
Donations are often perfect candidates for book sales. If they are in good condition but don't fit in your collection, don't hesitate to put them to good use by raising money through a book sale. Since your gift policy should address the sale of donated books, this should be an acceptable option to all parties.

Gifts to Encourage
Some libraries hold "Buy a Book for the Library" or memorial campaigns that can result in many new additions to the collection. It is very important, however, to retain control over collection development. Donated memorial books must meet all the same criteria as any other donation or purchase. One strategy might be to provide a list of titles (chosen by the librarian) from which customers can select memorial books. It is also vital to be sure that campaigns do not become a replacement for regular adequate funding

Other Ways to Involve the Public
This training site discusses many ways to include the community in the collection development process. Customers should be encouraged to participate in the selection process by requesting new materials, although final buying decisions should be made by the librarian. During a weeding project, you could seek the advice of knowledgeable patrons such as teachers, medical workers, or craftspeople to determine whether your materials measure up to current theoretical and practical standards.